

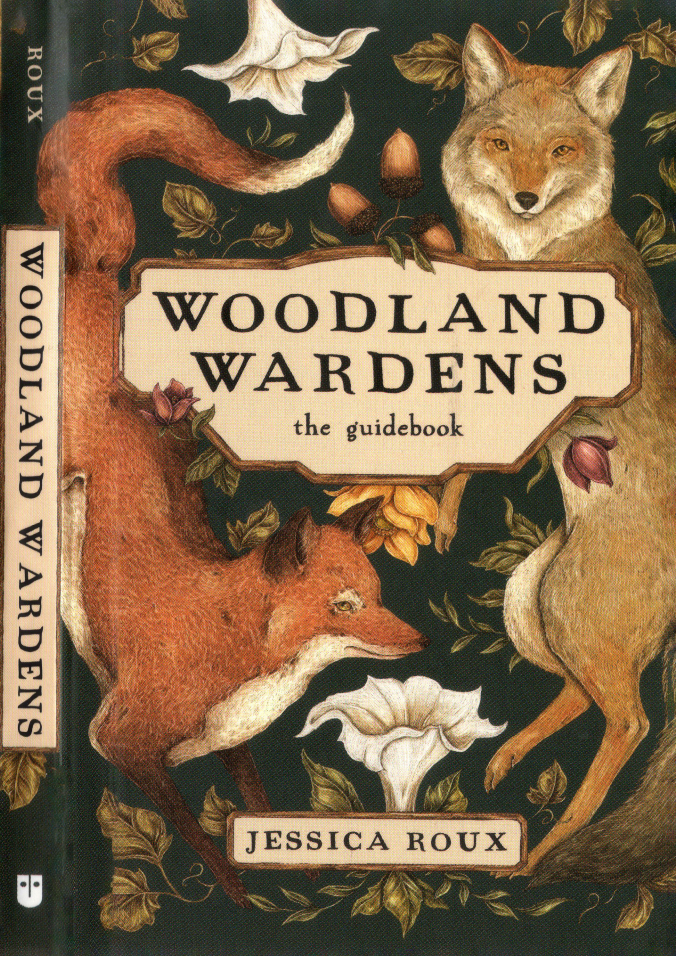


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ROUX

WOODLAND WARDENS



WOODLAND WARDENS

the guidebook

JESSICA ROUX

WOODLAND
WARDENS



TO MY STUDIO MATES AT
THE WARREN: A MAKE SPACE WHERE
I MADE MY CLOSEST FRIENDS.





**WOODLAND
WARDENS**

the guidebook



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INTRODUCTION





I have always been fascinated by animals. As a child, I spent my time outdoors, picking cicada shells off trees, catching fireflies, finding salamanders hiding under rocks, and painting what I saw. On the rare occasion when I wasn't outside, I was curled up indoors with a book. I loved escaping the mundane by discovering *Aesop's Fables*, imagining a life on the farm of *Charlotte's Web*, or wishing I could meet the shy Badger or silly Toad from *The Wind in the Willows*. I was drawn to animals in a way I could not understand, wishing to talk with them as I did my own friends. In a way, *Woodland Wardens* is an attempt to rekindle communication with my oldest companions, both real and imaginary.

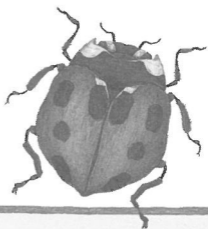
Pairing animals with plants came naturally to me, even if gardening didn't, initially. As a child, I loathed the Sunday afternoons we spent planting. I didn't enjoy the feeling of dirt under my fingernails or the sunburns that crept across my face, neck, and arms. However, I adored the flowers. I filled notebooks with drawings of roses, ferns, and buttercups. And when I found myself living in a small apartment in Brooklyn, trying to make it as an illustrator at the start of my career, the thing I missed the most about my home was the flora: the giant magnolia trees, their swollen buds waiting to burst forth with large, waxy flowers. I became enraptured by the Victorian language of flowers and began working the meanings of the blooms and herbs into my illustrations. I even became an avid gardener. When it came time to move, I made sure to find a place where I could grow

anything I wanted. My garden has become my greatest comfort in times of darkness. Flowers ignite a light and joy in me to which nothing can compare.

Historically, humans have always been in conversation with nature. From the Lascaux cave paintings of huge bison to ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs of cats and falcons, it's easy to see that animals played a central role in our early development. And we've been assigning meaning to both animals and plants since the dawn of time. Many of these meanings derive from characteristics of the plant or animal. For example, an aloof cat may symbolize independence, while a bluebell, bowing gently at its stem, may indicate humility. Other meanings draw more heavily from myths, legends, and folktales. Over time, stories of sly foxes, wise owls, and patient turtles have informed our understanding of those animals. Likewise, we've learned from ancient tales about fairies who made their homes in the blooms of foxgloves. Pairing plants with animals in a complementary way to offer a deeper truth, invite understanding, or inspire reflection, is a natural expression of my own story, as well as that of the wider world.



**HOW TO USE THE CARDS
AND GUIDEBOOK**







An easy way to get comfortable with a new deck is to draw a single card daily. Familiarize yourself with the artwork; explore the small details within the illustrations, like the motion of the animal's fur, the shape of the flower's bloom, or the color scheme. From there, reflect on your own experiences of the flora and fauna depicted. Ask yourself whether you've seen the animal wandering through the woods or the plant growing wild. If so, what do you remember about that encounter? What was happening in your life at the time, and what emotions were you experiencing? Or, if you haven't had an encounter, what are some characteristics you associate with the animal or plant? What stories do you know that involve them? We may think of owls as mysterious nighttime messengers, or we may associate them, as the ancient Greeks did, with wisdom. Some may associate buttercups with childhood, recalling a game of holding the bloom beneath someone's chin to see if it formed a yellow reflection. Naturally, our personal and cultural associations will shape how we interpret what we see and influence our reading of the cards.

The meanings I've assigned are based on personal history, mythology, folklore, and the Victorian language of flowers, but they are by no means fixed or comprehensive. Your own experiences with the plants and animals depicted may indicate different meanings, and those should be honored and explored. For example, if you see a particular animal as dangerous, it may offer a unique warning. The reverse is also true: if you are fascinated by vultures, their appearance in your reading could signal good fortune.



Some readers may prefer to avoid the guidebook altogether or use it only sparingly. I've designed the cards such that their color, texture, and layout offer clues to their meaning as well. For example, you may notice that cards with lighter backgrounds tend to be related to creativity and action while darker cards point to more introspective themes. Perhaps you note key differences between warm and cool-colored cards, or you draw connections based on position: Is the plant element framing or encircling the animal element? Does the animal appear to be in motion, or is it still? These visual clues may aid you in your readings and help you to recognize patterns. Perhaps you pull three birds, or three

blue backgrounds, or three spring-blooming flowers. Three birds may indicate a period of restlessness, a desire to travel, or a need for new freedom. Blue backgrounds reflect the sky and may indicate a need to spend more time outside. Three spring-blooming flowers may invite you to plan ahead, either by planting some snowdrops in the fall to blossom in the spring or by taking some time to reflect, sowing seeds of inspiration to bloom at a later date.

Finally, I suggest “carrying” the Wardens with you as you go about your day, keeping an eye out for familiar visitors. You may see pansies blooming outside your friend’s home, or your coworker might wear a dress with little foxes printed on it. Such signs are invitations to pay particular attention to that place or person. And sightings need not take place in the physical world. Perhaps a friend shares on social media a picture of a dahlia they grew or a painting they made of a wolf. These synchronicities are just as significant as those you may experience in nature. It’s not always feasible to spend time outdoors, and it’s my belief that the animal and plant spirits who need to reach us will do so in one form or another—through image, text, song, or even dream.

Above all, this deck is intended as a living tool for deepening your self-awareness, especially in relationship to nature. The word “warden” is used here in the sense of steward and guardian. While it’s easy for us humans to think of ourselves as dominant over or “in charge of” plants and animals, the truth is that we have always depended upon them, not just for survival but for guidance. The creatures

of this deck are indeed our wardens—our protectors—much as we are called to be theirs. And it's that spirit of collaboration I hope to encourage here. As you work with the cards, developing your own meanings and discovering personal resonances, allow yourself to be worked on *by* them and by the natural world they evoke.





SUGGESTED SPREADS

DAILY PRACTICE: *one-card pull*

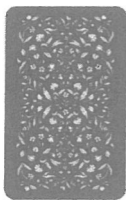
A simple yet effective practice for getting to know the Wardens is the one-card pull. Shuffle the cards however you prefer. (I like to shuffle, then twist the cards between both palms to mix their orientation, shuffle again, cut with my left hand, and then shuffle once more.) It can be helpful to focus on a question you'd like answered while shuffling. When you pull a card, reflect first on your own experiences with the animal and plant depicted. Then reference the card in the guidebook. Meditate on the card and think back to it throughout the day to see how the themes play out. Keeping a journal can be a helpful way to learn the cards and discover their deeper meanings. In my tarot and oracle journals, I quickly sketch the card I've pulled, then make a bulleted list of the themes that either come up for me personally or are indicated in the guidebook. I often return to my journal at the end of the day to reflect on what I encountered.

I especially recommend the one-card pull when you're faced with an upcoming obstacle, trip, or deadline. This way, you have a daily practice that allows you to reflect and act on a certain mood or theme. I often pull a card the day before a big deadline, and this helps me plan my to-do list.

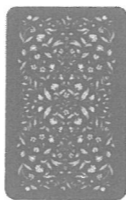
I also use the one-card pull in lieu of an Advent calendar, starting on December 1st and ending on Christmas Eve. This is often the most hectic part of my year and the time when I look forward to seeing my family the most. The practice helps me stay grounded and focused even amidst turmoil or anticipation.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE: *three-card pull*

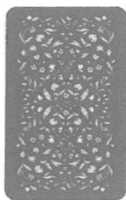
This is an easy spread for beginners, but it's appropriate for anyone. I use it often in my own practice, especially when reading for friends. Shuffle the cards, then pull one for the past, one for the present, and one for the future. Look at each of the cards and pay attention to any themes that jump out at you: maybe you pulled three reptiles or three herbs; maybe the cards are all facing left (toward the past); or maybe they have similar background colors. As you observe the cards, reflect on how you've grown, where you are now, and how you might build a better future.



PAST



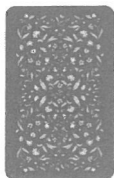
PRESENT



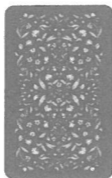
FUTURE

THE SEASONS: *four-card pull*

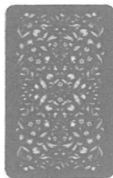
The seasons spread is similar to the past, present, and future reading, but each card represents a season in nature: winter, spring, summer, and fall. Start by shuffling and pulling a card for the current season. Next, pull a card for the previous season and place it to the left of the current season card. Then, pull two cards for the upcoming two seasons, and place them to the right of the current season card. This reading can offer a more specific timeline than the past, present, and future reading, which leaves more room for interpretation.



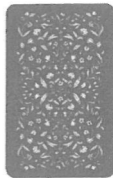
PAST
SEASON



CURRENT
SEASON



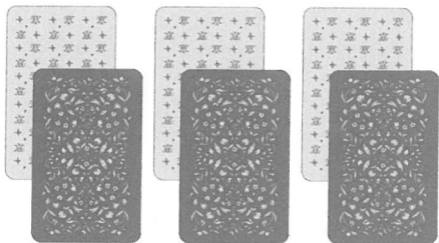
NEXT
SEASON



FOLLOWING
SEASON

IN COMBINATION WITH TAROT: *six-card pull*

I enjoy using oracle decks to assist with traditional tarot readings. I'll often pull an oracle card when an insight from my tarot reading is unclear or troubling. To combine this deck with your tarot practice, start by shuffling your favorite tarot deck, pulling three cards in order. These represent your current situation, the obstacle you face, and the outcome. Next, shuffle your *Woodland Wardens* deck and pull three more cards, placing them so that they overlap the bottom right corner of the tarot cards. These cards represent the tools you can use to achieve your desired outcome. For example, you may look to the fresh start of the Trout and Lily of the Valley or the sly ingenuity of the Fox and Ivy to assist you in addressing your obstacle.





0 THE MOUSE AND BUTTERCUP

MEANING: *innocence*



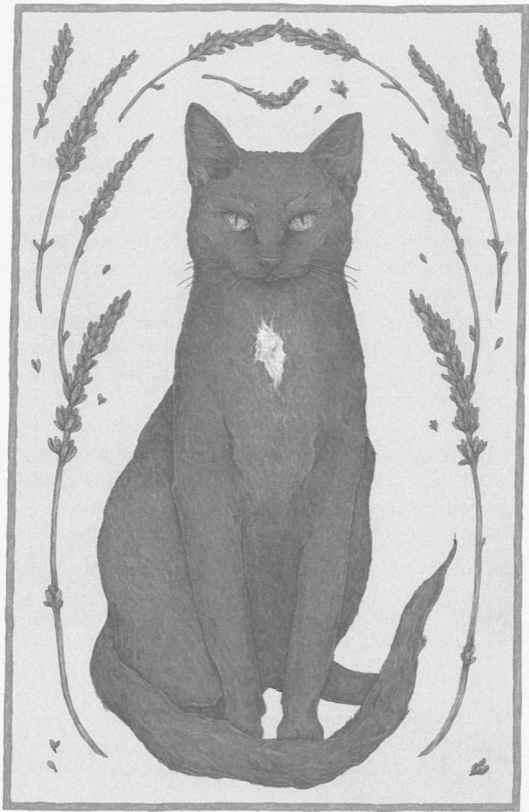
Like the Fool in a tarot deck, the Mouse and Buttercup is numbered zero. Both cards mark the start of a journey, and both remind us that we have much to learn. Mice are grounded and innocent, yet anyone who has dealt with a mouse in their house knows they are determined and highly adaptable. The mouse is paired with the humble buttercup, a symbol of childhood innocence. Have you ever held a buttercup under your chin? According to a centuries-old children's game, if the reflection of the flower glows yellow on your skin, it reveals that you like butter.

UPRIGHT: You may be embarking on a journey or starting down a new path. Remember that innocence and a lack of understanding are not negative qualities; instead, they remind us of our capacity for growth, adaptability, and learning.

REVERSE: You may be unprepared for what you undertake. Consider how you might adapt and learn to better lay the groundwork for future endeavors.

What do I hope to learn on this new path?

What potential dangers should I look out for?



I THE CAT AND LAVENDER

MEANING: *independence*



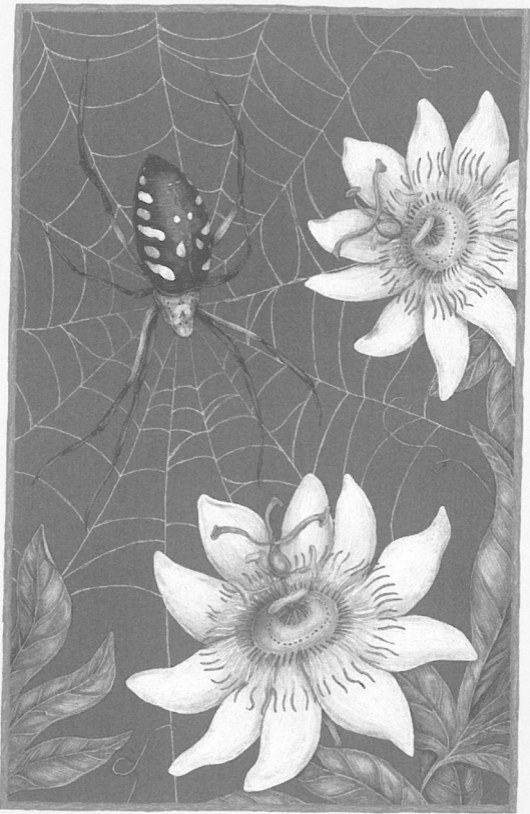
Cats are cunning, clever, and independent. Often loners, they represent self-reliance. While lavender's scent brings soothing comfort, its Victorian association with distrust reminds us to look inward, relying on our own instincts and inner resources.

UPRIGHT: You can seek your full potential without depending on validation from others. Power, resourcefulness, and potential are key words to remember.

REVERSE: Themes of imbalance and insecurity. Don't let fear guide your path; instead, think of a serene and solitary cat. Try to embody such trust in your own instincts and abilities.

How can I learn to trust myself?

What traits do I possess that I can rely on?



II THE SPIDER AND PASSIONFLOWER

MEANING: *creative ingenuity*



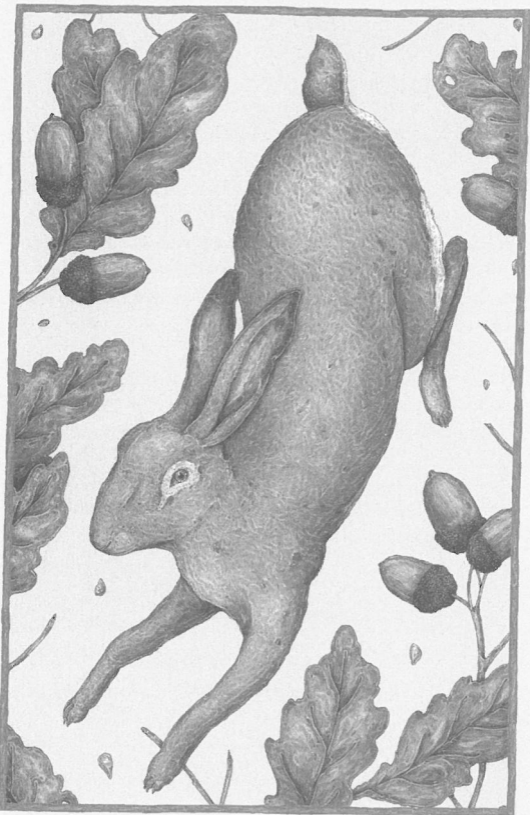
Spiders represent a balance of light and dark. Cunning yet patient, they spin intricate webs that are both beautiful and deadly. The passionflower is a vining flower that has come to symbolize faith. It was named by sixteenth-century Jesuit missionaries who associated the plant with the Passion of Christ: its filaments represented the crown of thorns, its ten petals, the ten faithful apostles, and so on.

UPRIGHT: You can solve your problems unconventionally and with cleverness. You need only exercise patience in order to fully appreciate the results of your labor.

REVERSE: Stagnation. To overcome a creative block, try to be like the spider: innovative and adept. Have faith that your quiet efforts will pay off in the end.

*How can I overcome an obstacle
using my talents?*

*When have I solved a problem using
my ingenuity in the past?*



III THE HARE AND OAK

MEANING: *new opportunities*



Hares are often symbols of fertility and love. Associated with the Celtic goddess Eostre, they represent springtime—a season of birth and abundance. A variety of ancient cultures have linked the oak tree with bravery and vitality. In ancient Greece, the oak was revered as the tree sacred to Zeus; in Norse mythology, it represented the tree of life; and in ancient Celtic and Druidic cultures, the oak was associated with the god Dagda.

UPRIGHT: A celebration of good fortune is in order. If you have been in a caregiving role, this is a reminder that your sacrifices will be repaid.

REVERSE: Themes of neglect and empty promises abound. Perhaps your hard work isn't paying off in the manner expected. Try connecting with the hare—a creature of great energy and fruitfulness—to power through the difficult times ahead.

What can I celebrate today?

*What exciting opportunities
should I follow up on?*



IV THE BEAR AND CEDAR

MEANING: *leadership*



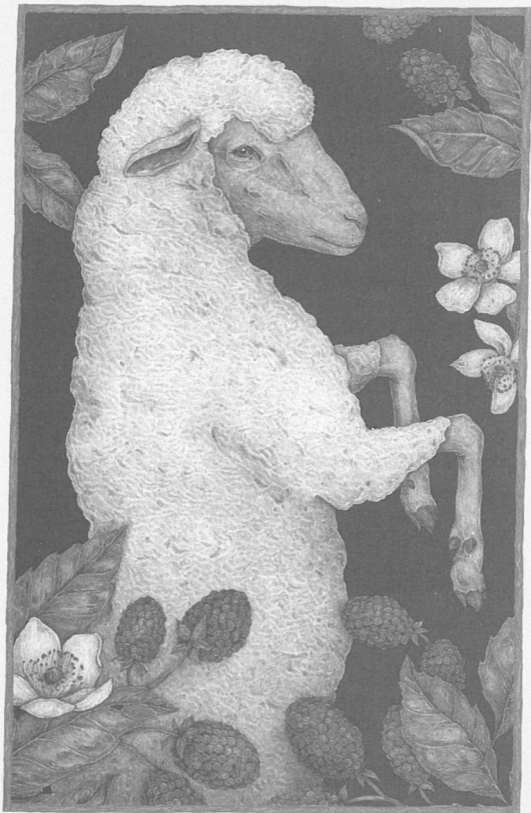
The Bear and Cedar calls us to be powerful but benevolent, embodying the qualities of a great leader. Bears are emperors of the woodland and guardians of the forest. Paired with cedar, a plant known for its healing, protective, and cleansing qualities, this card invites us into mature authority.

UPRIGHT: The spirit of the bear is guiding you to leadership opportunities and reminding you to rule with fairness and care.

REVERSE: You may be experiencing overwhelming challenges. Remember not to be hardened by this; inflexibility will get you nowhere. Instead, channel the protective qualities of cedar. Reflect, heal, and prepare.

How can I be a better leader?

*Who can benefit from my
knowledge and experience?*



V THE SHEEP AND BLACKBERRY

MEANING: *devotion*

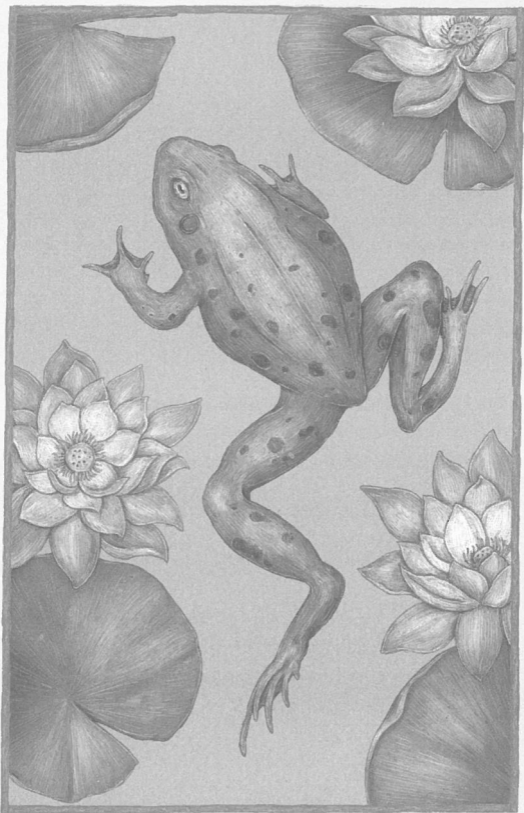


The Sheep and Blackberry calls us to focus on our commitments, whether they're to a partner, a job, a creative practice, or a spiritual tradition. Sheep are innocent and vulnerable and must be watched over and guided. Blackberries are symbols of protection with their large, brambling thorns. Their abundant fruit also symbolizes prosperity. Combining the energies of the two gives us a direction: honor our promises, allowing them to fruit and flourish.

UPRIGHT: In what people or practices do you find wisdom and stability? Remember to care well for these sources of guidance and protection.

REVERSE: You can be your own guide. Your wisdom comes from within rather than without, and it is your responsibility to impart this gift as a mentor or teacher.

*How can I better care for my relationships,
spiritual practices, or work?*



VI THE FROG AND LOTUS

MEANING: *metamorphosis*



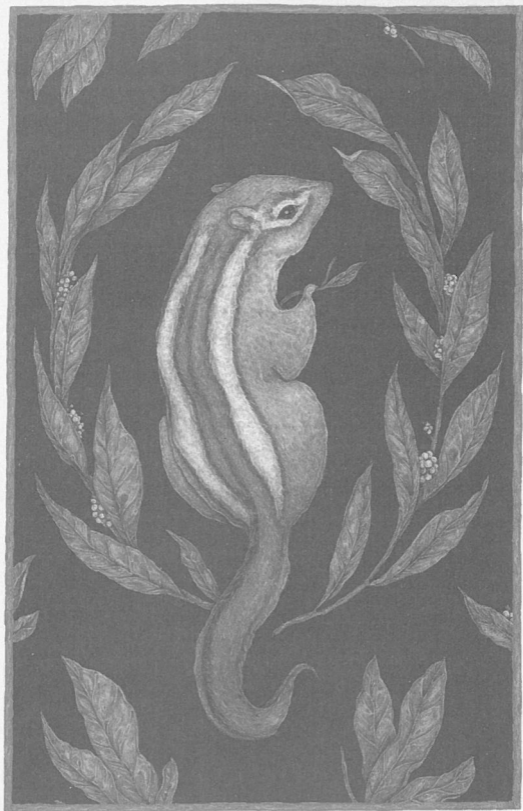
This card reminds us that change is natural, rebirth is possible, and a healing balance can be achieved. The frog, developing as it does from a tiny tadpole, symbolizes transformation. The lotus flower, too, symbolizes rebirth, unfurling even amid murky waters. Going through such a change can be difficult and a struggle, but the resulting metamorphosis opens us to growth, self-acceptance, and happiness.

UPRIGHT: Consider what in your life needs changing and think about the steps you can take to achieve that change. You owe it to yourself to allow your own growth and rebirth.

REVERSE: You cannot control everything in your life. Change is a part of nature, and it must be allowed to take its course. Remember that great beauty can result from metamorphosis.

*What can I change in myself
or my life for the better?*

*How can I be more accepting of
change I cannot control?*



VII THE CHIPMUNK AND LAUREL

MEANING: *Success*



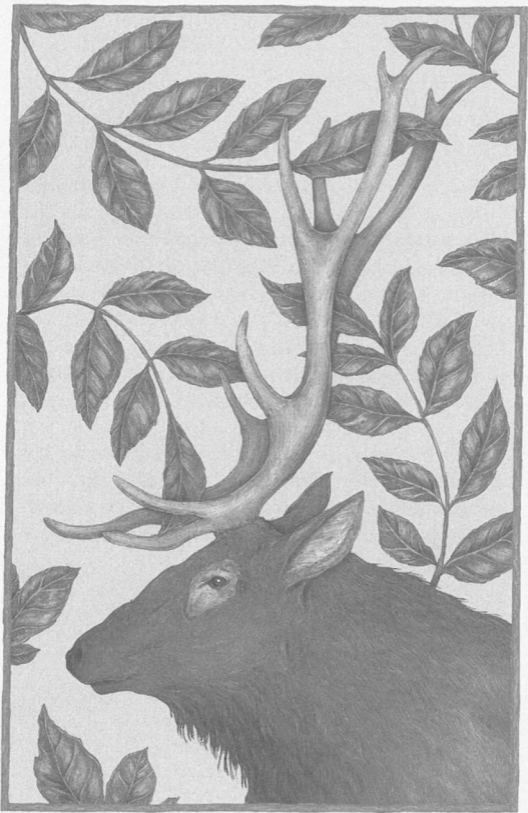
The Chipmunk and Laurel symbolizes a new venture that will surely lead to success. The chipmunk often takes the road less traveled, finding hidden pathways and adventure along the way. The laurel is a symbol of victory, used to crown the winners in the ancient Olympic games. Together, they tell us to take charge of our destiny, carve our own path, and find success.

UPRIGHT: Forge a unique path toward your desires. The road to achieving your goals is hardly ever straight and easy, but the journey is ultimately rewarding.

REVERSE: This can be a sign of stagnation. You may feel frustrated, stalled, or set back. Think about the clever and enterprising chipmunk. What lesser-known pathways could lead you to your goal? Or how might you redefine success?

What successes in my life can I celebrate?

*How can I carve my own path
and live my truth?*



VIII THE ELK AND ASH

MEANING: *strength*



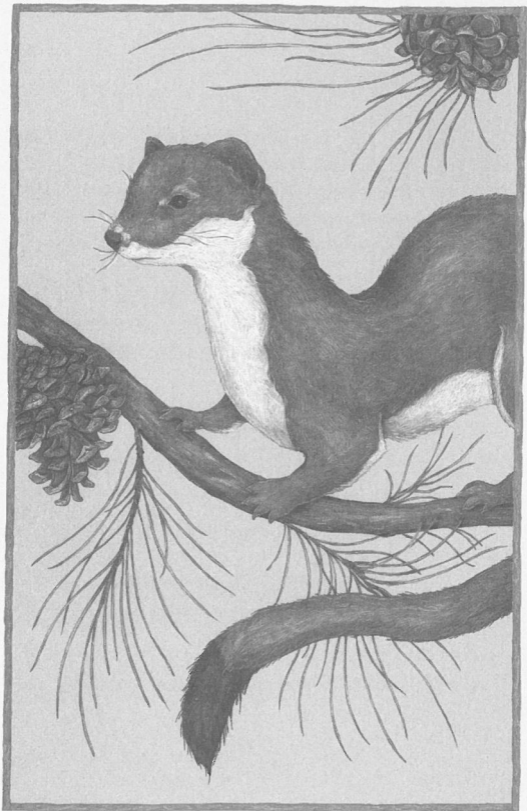
Elk are colossal creatures crowned with substantial antlers. Known to cover great distances over difficult terrain, they are symbols of strength and endurance. Likewise, ash trees are sturdy and resolute, able to flourish even in harsh environments.

UPRIGHT: You are called to gather your strength ahead of a challenge. Face it with confidence in your own stamina. Tame any unruly elements that try to derail you.

REVERSE: You may feel overwhelmed in the face of a challenge that seems impossible to overcome. Call on the spirit of the Elk and Ash; ask to be reminded of your own strength.

Am I prepared to face upcoming challenges?

How does inner strength differ from outer strength, and what situations call for each?



IX THE WEASEL AND PINE

MEANING: *introspection*



Weasels can be warriors or spies, moving quickly and often alone. They make observations from afar and adjust their plans accordingly. Remember that solitary creatures are nothing to fear, and an introverted nature is nothing to feel ashamed of; knowing oneself and being comfortable alone are desirable skills. Like the weasel, the pine tree works to be self-sufficient. One of the fastest growing evergreens, its prickly needles have a waxy coating that helps them retain water.

UPRIGHT: You are called to a time of solitude. Isolation allows for contemplation, which can lead to self-knowledge.

REVERSE: You may be overcome by loneliness. Think of the weasel's joy in solitude; practice caring for yourself when alone. Meditate on the waxy needles of the pine tree. Ask yourself what protections you may need to remain green and healthy year-round.

When do I like to be alone?

*How can I better understand
and respect myself?*



X THE DUCK AND CHRYSANTHEMUM

MEANING: *luck*



The phrase “lucky duck” isn’t just a lighthearted rhyme; ducks can be symbols of good fortune. In ancient Egypt, ducks were associated with riches—especially gold—and frequently given as offerings to the gods. Likewise, chrysanthemums, bursting forth with long and elegant petals, signify abundance. Luck can be a fickle and mysterious force, but it is also, as Roman philosopher Seneca once mused, “what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”

UPRIGHT: You are on the brink of good fortune. Be open to situations that may bring about positive transformation.

REVERSE: Take care to get your ducks in a row. Do some research before taking action to avoid a misstep.

How can I prepare for the future?

Is destiny mutable, or set in stone?



XI THE GOAT AND WILLOW

MEANING: *overcoming obstacles*



The goat is a symbol of balance, jumping with ceaseless energy, perching easily on even the narrowest footholds. Its vitality and grace are enviable. The willow is a symbol of mourning, often appearing on gravestones. In Greek mythology, willows are said to mark the entrance to the underworld. When combined, the goat and willow show us that there may be losses to suffer, but we can overcome them with renewed energy and the right balance.

UPRIGHT: A recent loss may have you feeling down, or a new, unfortunate obstacle may have appeared in your path. Realign yourself with your goals to regain control of the situation.

REVERSE: You may be feeling off-kilter. The negative energy in your life may threaten to overcome you. Let the spirit of the goat lead you to a sense of harmony. Remember that life is a balance: we cannot appreciate pleasure without experiencing pain.

How can I better achieve balance in my life?

*How can I plan ahead to navigate
the obstacles in my path?*



XII THE LIZARD AND PITCHER PLANT

MEANING: *stagnation*

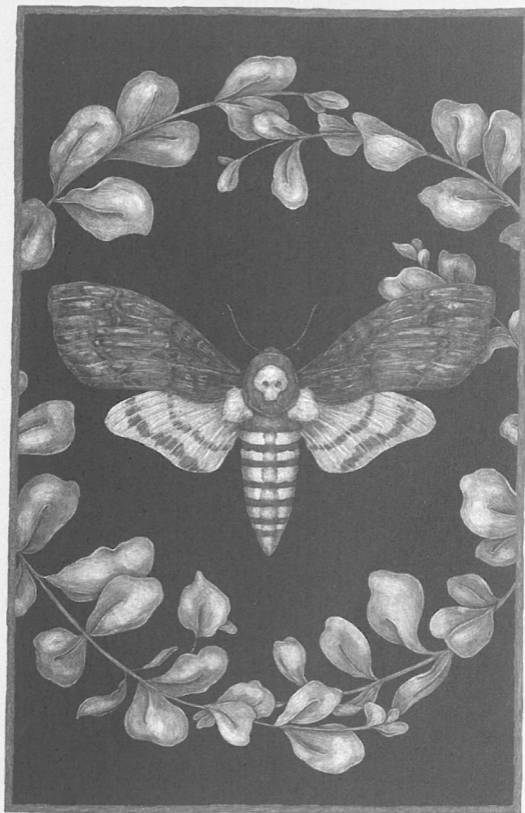


The carnivorous pitcher plant traps its prey within its leaves. The lizard, which may occasionally find itself ensnared in a pitcher plant's trap, has come to represent death and resurrection, as it possesses the unique ability to drop its tail when stuck. A new tail can grow in the old one's place, though it is never quite the same as the original.

UPRIGHT: You may be feeling stuck, frozen in place, or without an escape. Reflect on the lizard's ability to shed and regrow its tail. There may be things in your life you can leave behind, making way for new growth.

REVERSE: This indicates a lost opportunity. Remember that it's okay to pass on some things, but before you turn away, ask yourself why you may feel averse or disinterested. What fears, if any, inform your decision?

*What could I drop in order to feel like
I am moving forward again?*



XIII THE MOTH AND EUCALYPTUS

MEANING: *an ending*



The Moth and Eucalyptus is at number thirteen for a reason: It mirrors the meaning of the Death card in a traditional tarot deck. The Death card rarely indicates literal death but rather marks an ending of some kind and provides us with the knowledge and power to let go. The moth shown here is the death's-head hawkmoth, named for the unique, skull-like marking on its back. The death's-head is nocturnal, and, like all moths, it flies toward the light. Eucalyptus is a symbol of protection, as the oil from this plant can be used to guard against and soothe a variety of ailments.

UPRIGHT: An ending is imminent. This could mean the end of a relationship, a hobby or interest, a job, or any number of other things. While endings sometimes mark loss, they don't always, and even if we do experience grief, we have the power to emerge from it with a better understanding of ourselves.

REVERSE: Your resistance to change is preventing you from embracing your full potential. It's okay to let go and move forward; as painful as it may be at first, loosening your grip on the past will open the door to transformation.

How can I be more accepting of change?

What tools do I have that might help me feel safe and protected when a change occurs in my life?



XIV THE VULTURE AND ASPHODEL

MEANING: *upheaval*



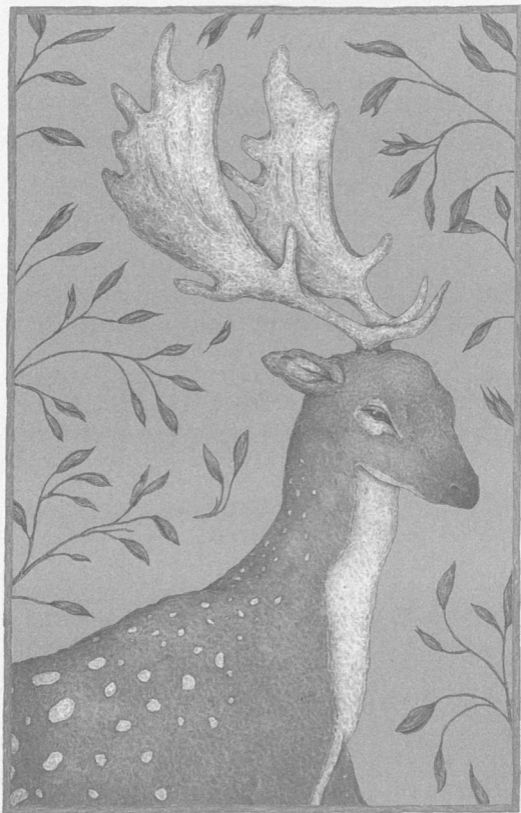
The Vulture and Asphodel indicates an unforeseen upheaval leading to grief, mourning, or regret. The vulture is often associated with death, but it plays an important role in our ecosystem. Its consumption of carrion (the decaying flesh of animals) prevents the spread of disease. Relatedly, in Greek myth, asphodel was said to grow in the underworld, and to the Victorians, it sent the tragic message: "My regrets follow you to the grave." Often, what follows upheaval looks like ruin, and it's tempting to clear the rubble and start again. The Vulture and Asphodel reminds us that there is value in what's been lost. Take time to grieve before you rebuild, lest you harbor regret.

UPRIGHT: A trauma has occurred, and you need time to grieve. Cleanse your wounds carefully before attempting to move on.

REVERSE: You may be feeling trapped in a cycle of grief, unable to heal or change. If you're overwhelmed, consult with others who can help you identify the source or sources of your unresolved pain. It's impossible to clean a wound we don't know we have.

How do I experience grief?

How do I redefine myself after an upheaval?



XV THE DEER AND OAT

MEANING: *healing*



The shy and gentle fallow deer is known for its white spots and the broad, velvety antlers it sheds and regrows each year. Similarly, oats are symbols of restorative nutrition. Even in poor soil, oats can flourish, providing hearty sustenance.

UPRIGHT: Rest and recharge. Moderation and mindfulness are key as you recover from trauma or a period of intense exertion.

REVERSE: You may be feeling overwhelmed and in need of a break. Consider withdrawing for a while to heal in isolation.

How do I rest and recharge?

What practices nourish my soul?



XVI THE CROW AND DOGWOOD

MEANING: *intelligence*



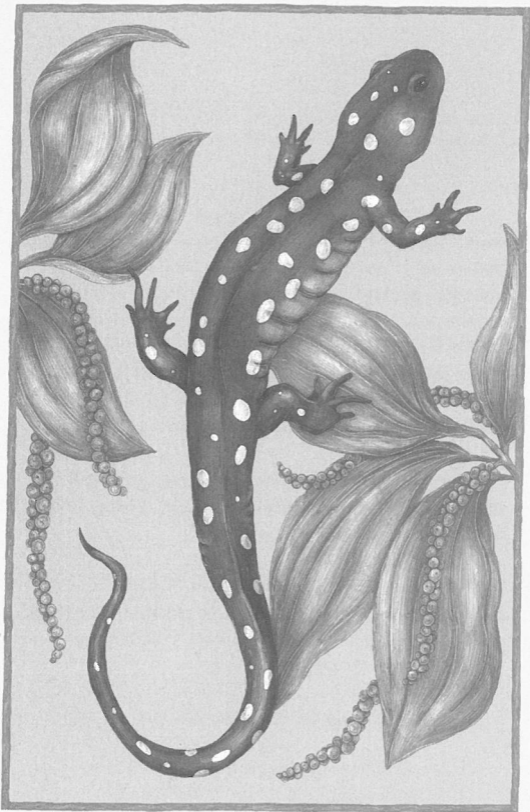
he crow is an incredibly intelligent bird associated with the power of foresight and the ability to use tools. Today, it's often used to signify darkness or foreboding—but modern depictions rarely do the crow justice. According to Norse folklore, the crow is a powerfully positive symbol meant to remind us of our skills and resources. It says: “You are capable of solving any problem.” Like the crow, the dogwood has a somewhat confused public image. Its beautiful, light-colored petals convey gentleness and whimsy. Few know that its hard bark and strong frame make it an uncommonly durable tree, able to withstand even the harshest weather.

UPRIGHT: You have the tools to fulfill your goals and solve any problem that stands in your way. You need only look inward to find wisdom and strength.

REVERSE: You may feel like a fraud or imposter. The crow is here to remind you of your intelligence, the dogwood your strength. Your accomplishments are your own, and you deserve the success you've achieved.

What am I knowledgeable about?

What are my creative or professional goals, and how can I accomplish them?



XVII THE SALAMANDER AND BLACK PEPPER

MEANING: *inspiration*



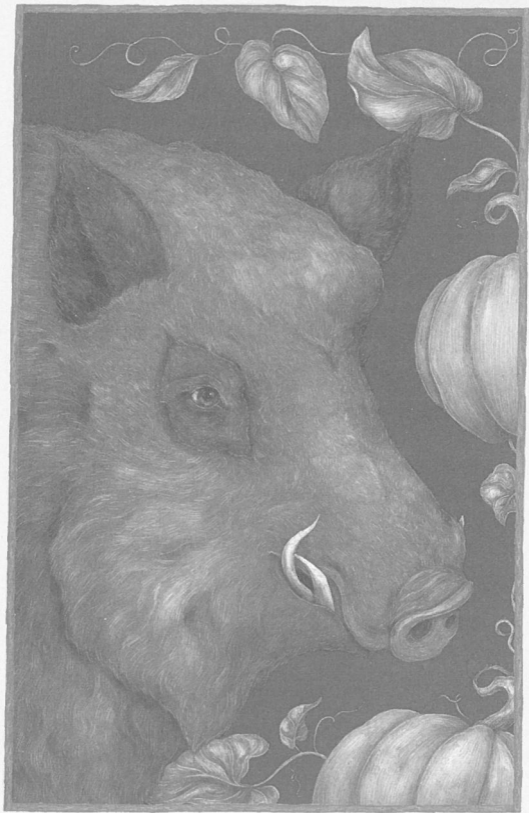
ymbols of fire and heat, the salamander and black pepper call us to be full of energy and inspired. Both Aristotle and Pliny the Elder wrote of the salamander's ability to withstand flames, and the creature's association with fire is echoed in ancient Greek myth. Black pepper, or peppercorn, has an earthy flavor with a spicy kick, making it a perfect match for the fire-friendly salamander.

UPRIGHT: A new opportunity awaits. To fulfill it, you must remain inspired, applying your full energy to your creative endeavors.

REVERSE: You may be feeling the heat. Stakes are high, and the pressure is getting to you. Remember the salamander's ability to withstand flames and hold your ground.

What inspires me?

*How do I invite and incorporate
more inspiration into my life?*



XVIII THE BOAR AND PUMPKIN

MEANING: *confidence*



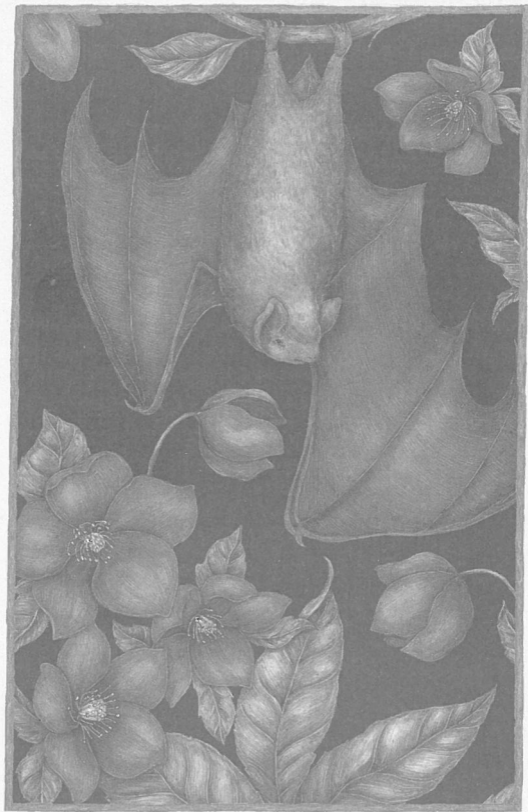
With their winding vines and large, heavily seeded fruit, pumpkins signify abundance, health, and resilience. Meanwhile, the fierce and intelligent boar is known for its sharp tusks and aggressive movements. Combined, the boar and pumpkin embody self-assurance.

UPRIGHT: Your confidence is well-founded. Any insults or attempts to damage your morale will roll off your back. You are thick-skinned like the pumpkin and courageous like the boar.

REVERSE: Your fearlessness may lead you into dangerous territory. Take a step back and reassess. You can remain confident while taking time to be scrupulous.

What accomplishments am I proud of?

*How can I improve my confidence
and sense of worth?*



XIX THE BAT AND HELLEBORE

MEANING: *intuition*



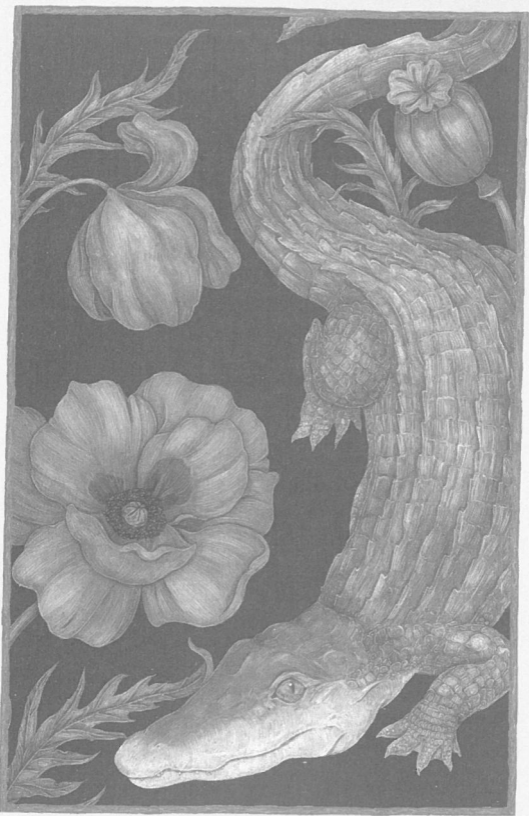
Bats are guardians of the night, representing dreams, visions, and the subconscious. They show us how to access our mystical side. Hellebore is an unusual flower. Blooming in the winter with downturned sepals, it resembles a cup being poured out—a symbol of emotional candor. Together, the bat and hellebore tell us to trust our intuition.

UPRIGHT: Your instincts can be relied upon. Curl inward like the hellebore, and as the blind bat trusts its hearing, trust in your intuition to guide you.

REVERSE: Your thoughts and actions are out of sync. You may be heading down the wrong path, or you might have put your trust in the wrong person or thing. If something feels off, it usually is. Pause, listen, and respect your inner knowing.

How can I learn to trust my gut?

Do I need to analyze a problem, or is the answer more immediate and instinctual?



XX THE CAIMAN AND POPPY

MEANING: *dreams*



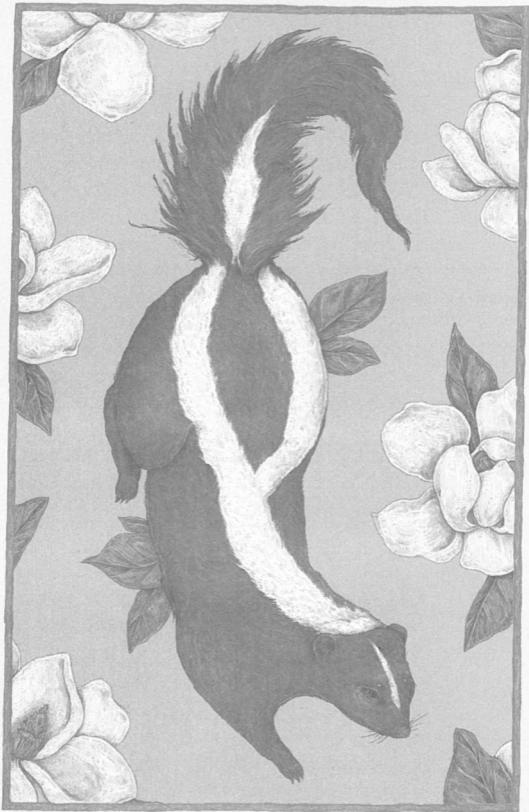
Exceptionally quiet and still, the caiman is an alligator-like reptile that spends much of its time in a trance-like state, rousing only to snare its prey. Likewise, the poppy is closely associated with sleep. Since ancient times, the powerful sedative opium has been derived from its seeds. Together, the caiman and poppy tell us about our dreams.

UPRIGHT: A dream of yours is about to come true. Stay still yet alert like the caiman, and at the right moment, seize your opportunity with relish.

REVERSE: Your head is in the clouds. Instead of dwelling in fantasy, think about the practical steps you can take to achieve your wildest dreams.

What have I dreamt about recently?

How can I make my dreams a reality?



XXI THE SKUNK AND MAGNOLIA

MEANING: *protection*



he skunk knows how to shield itself by spraying its foes with a foul odor. Its black and white fur serves as a warning to all would-be assailants.

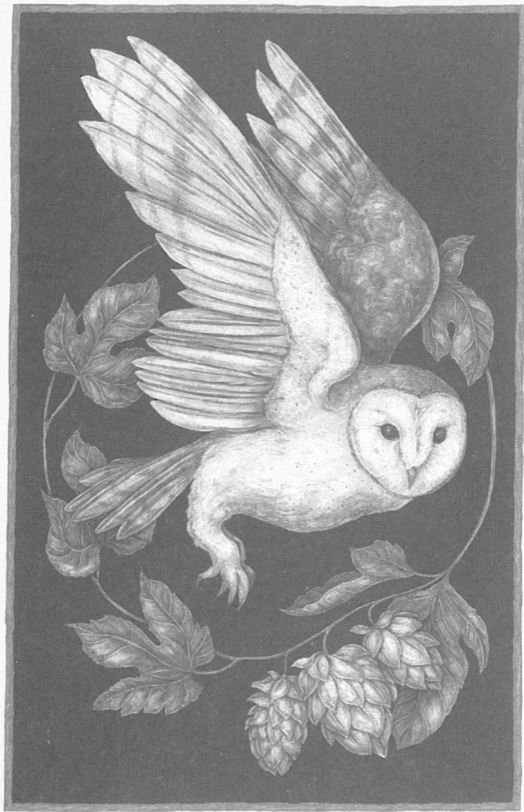
Similarly, the magnolia is known for its large, waxy leaves and copious blooms. Its thick-petaled flowers are some of the oldest on earth, having evolved to endure damage from beetles.

UPRIGHT: You are safe. Your boundaries are respected, and your home is intact. Remember that when you are protected, it becomes your duty to protect others. Extend your shelter to those without one.

REVERSE: Self-protection can hinder growth. You may be misinterpreting a situation and acting defensively. Ask yourself why you feel the need for armor. Could greater vulnerability benefit you?

How can I protect others?

Who or what makes me feel safe?



XXII THE OWL AND HOP

MEANING: *wisdom*



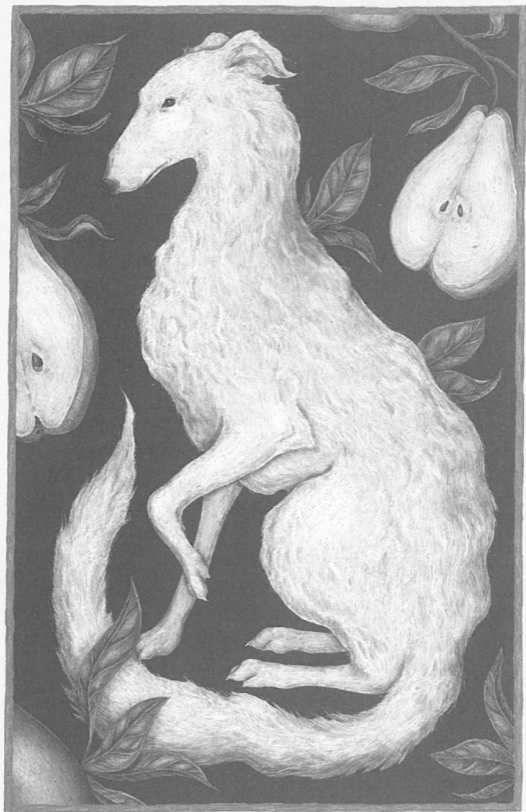
Wls are closely associated with Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom. Known for their nocturnal vision, owls represent knowledge and erudition—with a hint of mystery. The hop is an impressive plant, able to climb up to twenty feet in a single growing season. Combined, the pair indicates spiritual and intellectual fulfillment.

UPRIGHT: You have come to the end of a long journey. Relish in your achievement, taking deep, satisfying breaths.

REVERSE: You may be burdened by feelings of regret or lack of fulfillment. Reflect on your past successes and think practically about your current goals. Even a towering hop vine climbs one small step at a time.

Am I content?

*If I've reached a state of fulfillment,
am I willing to humble myself
and try something new?*



XXIII THE HOUND AND PEAR

MEANING: *loyalty*



he hound is the ultimate symbol of loyalty and friendship. Stories abound in folklore and throughout history of dogs protecting their companions, saving children, and alerting their masters to danger. The legend of Saint Guinefort is one such story: This thirteenth-century French greyhound saved his owner's infant son from an attack by a viper. When the owner came upon the scene, he found Guinefort with bloody jaws, sitting beside the empty cradle. Believing the hound to be the murderer, the owner killed Guinefort. Only later, when he heard his son's cries and discovered him beneath the cradle next to the dead snake, did he realize his tragic mistake. Like the faithful hound, the pear is a symbol of care and affection. Often given as a gift, it is sweet but easily bruised, requiring tenderness from its handler.

UPRIGHT: A friendship is flourishing. Your kindness and loyalty have been noted, and your friend appreciates you.

REVERSE: You may be harshly or irrationally judging those closest to you. While you might feel undeserving of kindness or friendship, this life is too difficult to face alone. Accept companionship and avoid lashing out at those who care for you.

Am I loyal to my friends?

How can I improve my friendships so that my companions feel loved and appreciated?



XXIV THE MARTEN AND FOXGLOVE

MEANING: *mischief*



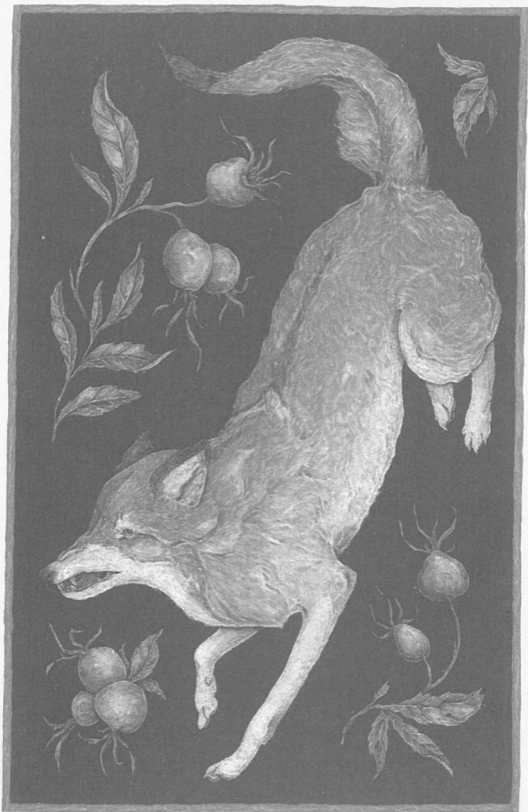
The Marten and Foxglove represents the archetypal trickster: the lighthearted mischief-maker, the lover of chaos and spontaneity. Martens are a type of weasel known for their curiosity, quick movements, and occasional aggression. Romanian folklore tells of martens playing tricks on horses, braiding their manes in the night so they wake to a tangled mess of hair in the morning. And foxgloves are said to be the homes of fairies—another elusive and mischievous creature. For this reason, they are associated with riddles and secrecy.

UPRIGHT: Pay attention to opportunities for spontaneity, travel, and playfulness. A bit of lighthearted mischief—so long as it doesn't hurt anyone—can be healthy!

REVERSE: Beware of others' dishonesty. A trick or scam may be afoot.

Do I embrace spontaneity?

*Can I learn to let go and make room
in my life for more adventure?*



XXV THE WOLF AND ROSE HIP

MEANING: *guardianship*



The wolf travels in a pack, protecting its family and community. Like the hound, the wolf signifies loyalty and commitment. Relatedly, the rose hip is a source of food but also a symbol of love, as it is the berry produced by the rose plant. Its combined associations with nourishment and affection make it an emblem of familial love and care.

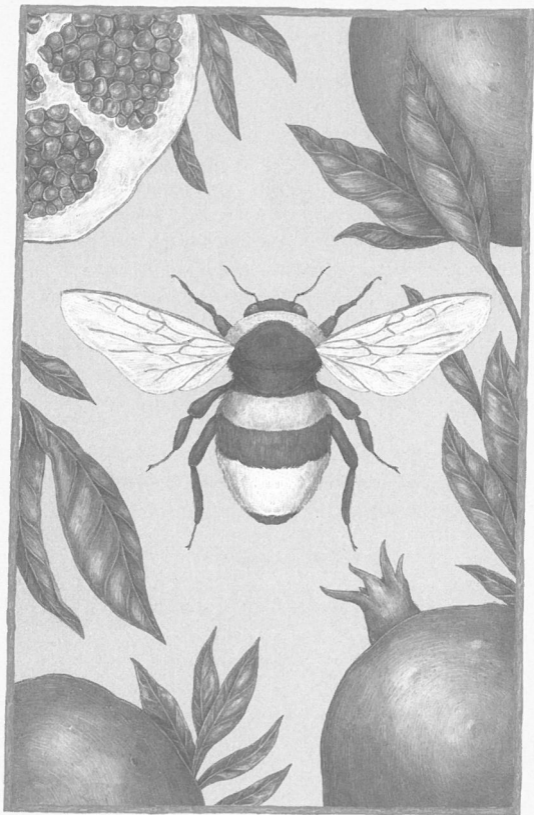
UPRIGHT: You are called to be a mentor. Who among your pack might need your counsel? Taking a leadership role in community activism is another way to lead like the wolf.

REVERSE: You are at a crossroads and in need of guidance. Advice from a trusted friend or family member may help you find your way.

Whom can I mentor?

How can I be a leader in my community?

Whom do I turn to for help?



XXVI THE BEE AND POMEGRANATE

MEANING: *productivity*



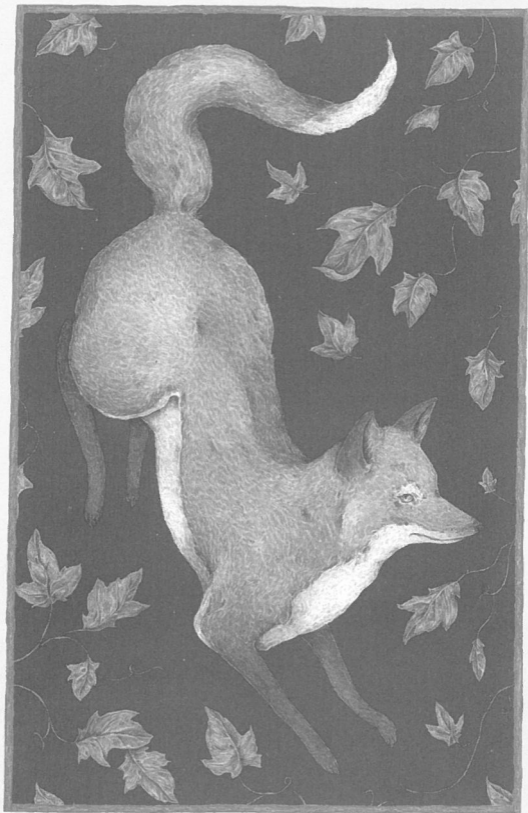
The Bee and Pomegranate calls us to create with purpose. Bees are known for their hard work and industriousness; the phrase “busy as a bee” derives from Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, written in the fourteenth century. Pomegranates are tough-skinned and difficult to open, but once their exterior is pierced, hundreds of seeds burst forth, signifying fertility and abundance.

UPRIGHT: You are at your most productive. Take care to ensure your labor fulfills you.

REVERSE: You may be struggling with procrastination. Consider resting for a while before attempting to get back on track.

When am I at my most productive?

*Am I feeling fulfilled in my work,
and if no, how do I change that?*



XXVII THE FOX AND IVY

MEANING: *adaptability*



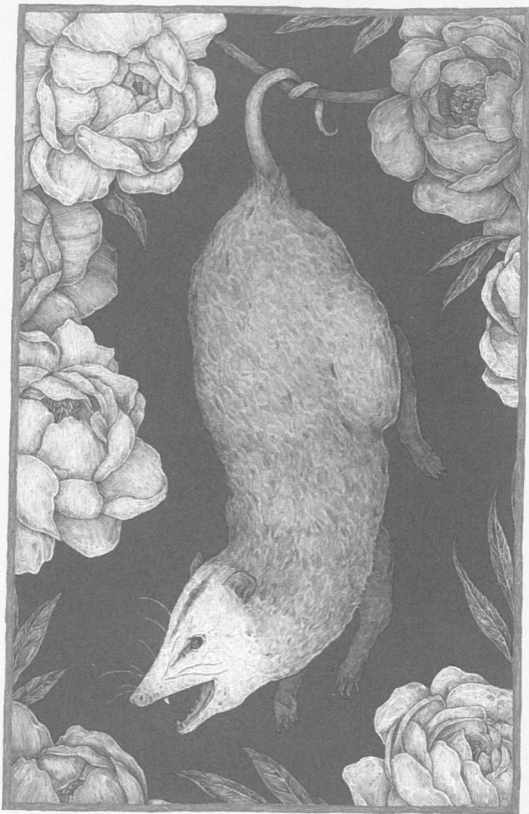
oxes are cunning, quick-thinking, and clever. When paired with ivy—a hardy plant that flourishes even in harsh environments—the fox reminds us to apply our cleverness toward adaptability.

UPRIGHT: Allow the fox's ingenuity to guide you. Nimbleness and adaptability will suit you well in your endeavors.

REVERSE: Your stubbornness may be holding you back. Remain open-minded and beware of becoming stuck in our ways.

Do I feel stuck?

How can I adapt to changes in my life?



XXVIII THE OPOSSUM AND PEONY

MEANING: *bashfulness*

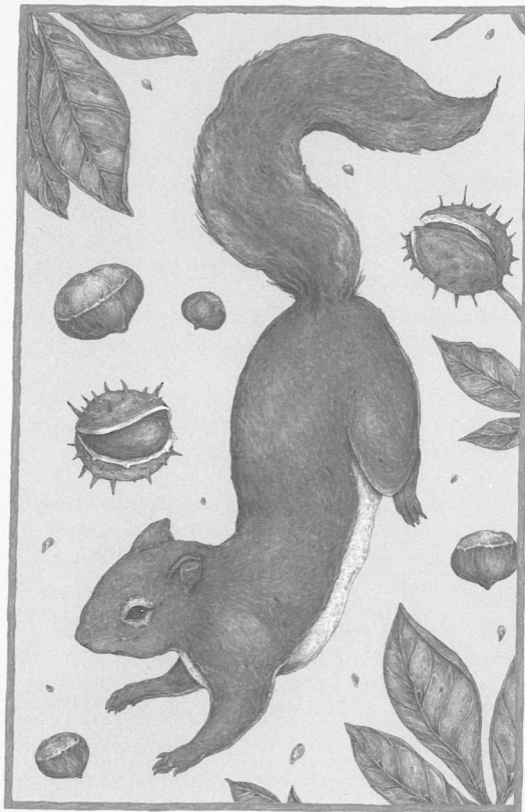


o “play possum” is to remain quiet and still when faced with danger. The expression comes from the opossum’s unique reaction to fear: it keels over and pretends to be dead. This is an instinctual response and an effective one. Spotting what appears to be a dead opossum, predators will often lose interest. Similarly, the beautiful peony flower is associated with bashfulness. According to Greek mythology, nymphs who wished to hide from mortal eyes would disguise themselves as peonies.

UPRIGHT: You may wish to hide away from the world. While periods of solitude are necessary and healthful, be sure your retreat isn’t driven by fear.

REVERSE: While you’ve recently been shaken—perhaps you’ve passed through some turmoil or endured a disorienting change—you are now ready to stand on your own two feet.

*How do I respond to fear,
instinctually or otherwise?*



XXIX THE SQUIRREL AND CHESTNUT

MEANING: *preparation*



To ensure sustenance through the winter, the squirrel buries its nuts, hiding them from other squirrels and predators. Chestnuts—small nuts that grow into large, productive trees—are symbols of abundance. Together, the squirrel and chestnut remind us that careful preparation will often yield riches.

UPRIGHT: You have prepared well and can expect to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Your resourcefulness and foresight will be rewarded.

REVERSE: Prepare for the winter ahead. While fun and games are necessary parts of life, don't become so distracted that you forget to provide for yourself.

Am I prepared for the future?

Have I been working hard to achieve my goals?



XXX THE BEAVER AND BIRCH

MEANING: *home*



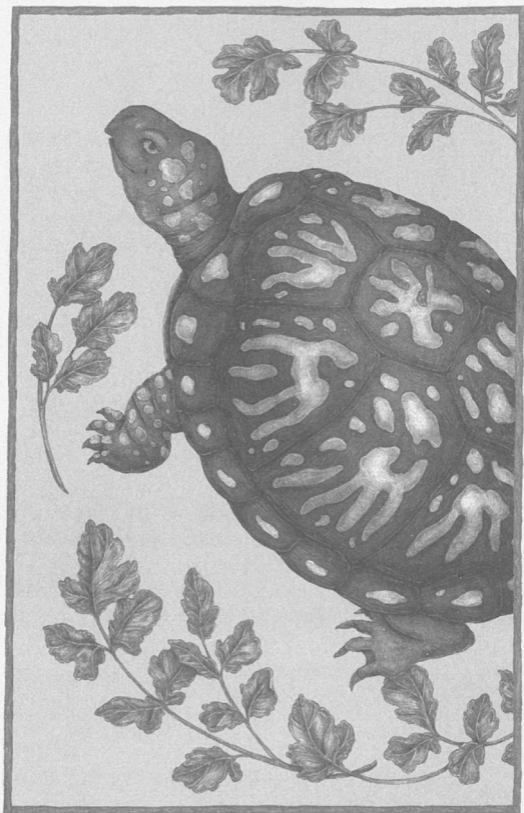
The beaver works hard to build the lodge where it raises its young. Using twigs, grasses, rocks, and mud, it constructs a safe environment for its family as well as a natural habitat for migrating birds. Birch trees symbolize new beginnings, and they seldom grow alone. In medieval Europe, they were used as maypoles in pagan celebrations of Midsummer. Because their wood was thought to protect the young and ward off evil spirits, it was often used to build cradles.

UPRIGHT: Now is a time to focus on nesting, homesteading, and settling down. Decorate and tend to your environment in a way that supports a feeling of home.

REVERSE: You may be feeling reclusive, like a hermit in your cave. Consider planning a trip. Your spirit will benefit from a time of travel and self-discovery.

What do I appreciate about my home?

Is my home a place or a feeling?



XXXI THE TURTLE AND CORIANDER

MEANING: *satisfaction*



The Turtle and Coriander calls us to be satisfied with what we have been given or what we have achieved. It invites a moment of rest and reflection. Perhaps due to Aesop's fable, "The Tortoise and the Hare," turtles are symbols of patience and good health. In this folktale, the slow but determined tortoise wins its race against the speedy but distracted rabbit. The turtle triumphs by pacing himself, illustrating the adage: "Slow and steady wins the race." Similarly, in the Victorian language of flowers, coriander indicates concealed worth, reminding us that things may not always be as they appear. In other words: A dedicated tortoise who puts in the work can achieve just as much as—if not more than—the swiftest rabbit.

UPRIGHT: Slow down and enjoy the journey. Avoid rushing toward your goals for the sake of winning. Arrive in your own time.

REVERSE: Beware of stagnation. While slow and steady might win the race, standing still gets you nowhere.

What in my life brings me satisfaction?

*Have I taken time to express
gratitude for what I have?*

Am I rushing things or honoring my own pace?



XXXII THE BADGER AND GINKGO

MEANING: *healing wounds*



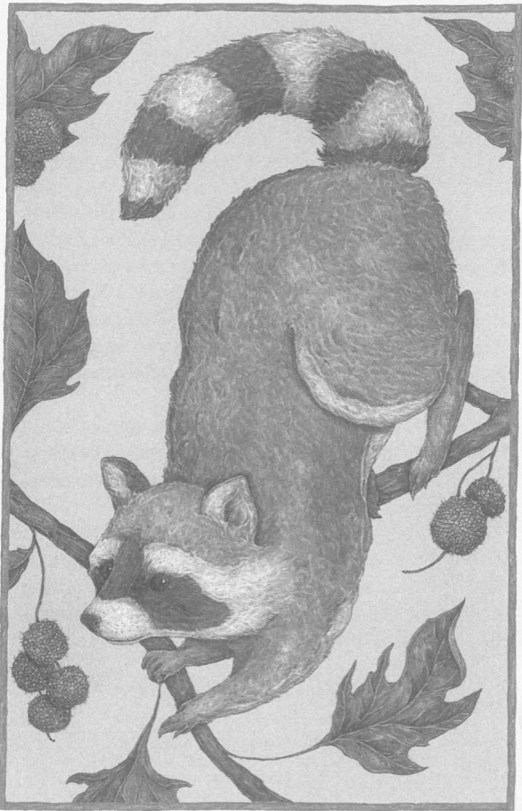
inkgo is a sacred and ancient tree. Fossil records show the tree first arose in the Jurassic period, millions of years ago. Native to Asia, the ginkgo is a symbol of peace and hope in China and can be seen in temples and gardens in Japan. The badger, in contrast, is known to be hot-headed and aggressive. Due to its speed and tendency to roam at night, the badger is often cast as a sinister shape-shifter in European and Asian folklore. Tempered by ginkgo, the badger invites us to reflect on harm we may have caused and seek to heal old wounds.

UPRIGHT: Your actions have hurt someone. Apologize and take steps to right your wrong, setting the stage for healing. Consider whether your own wounds have led you to inflict pain on others.

REVERSE: Someone has hurt you. The person in question may not be aware of their wrong, but your pain is undeniable. Be gentle with yourself. Lick your wounds so they can heal properly.

• *Am I inflicting my own wounds on others?*

What steps can I take toward healing?



XXXIII THE RACCOON AND SYCAMORE

MEANING: *curiosity*

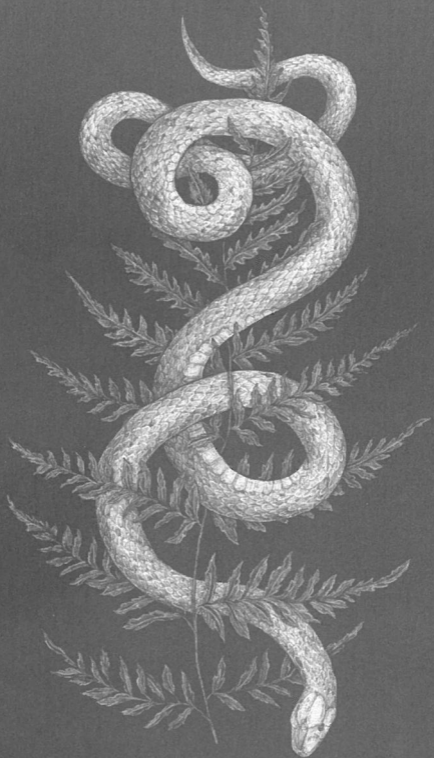


The Raccoon and Sycamore calls us to explore a thrilling new interest, idea, or opportunity. Raccoons are intelligent creatures, dexterous and eager. Often likened to bandits due to the mask-like markings around their eyes, they are quite loveable rascals—rarely seeking to cause harm. Like the raccoon, the sycamore tree is associated with a desire to learn and know. In the Bible, a man named Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to get a better view of Jesus as he passes through the town of Jericho. Jesus rewards the man's curiosity by visiting his home.

UPRIGHT: You are well-equipped to explore uncharted territories. Climb high into the tree of your interests, bounding from branch to branch. Now is an auspicious time to discover new truths about yourself and your abilities.

REVERSE: You may be feeling bored, left out, or like nothing piques your interest. Take time for rest and self-care. We cannot feel curious when our most basic needs are unmet.

*What new hobbies or interests
do I want to explore?*



XXXIV THE SNAKE AND FERN

MEANING: *starting over*



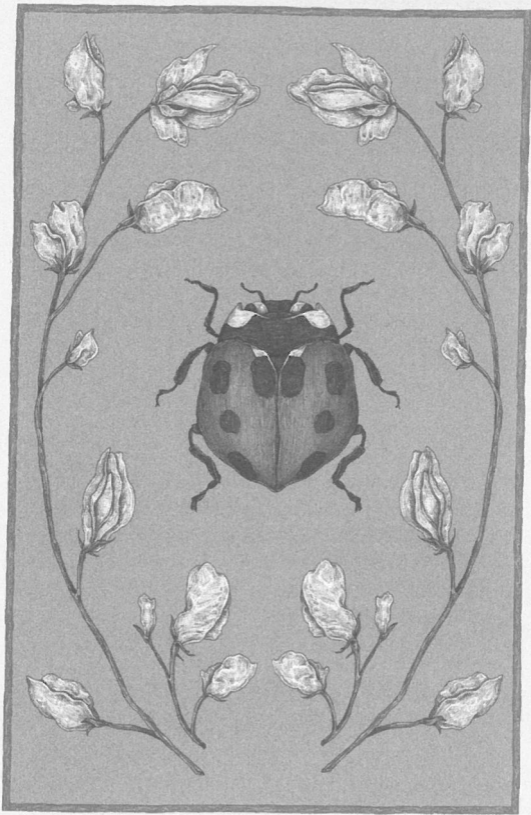
The Snake and Fern calls us to start anew. Regularly shedding its skin, the snake is a symbol of rebirth and transformative healing. And in many cultures, the fern is associated with new life and new beginnings. To the Māori of New Zealand, an image of the unfurling silver fern frond, or *koru*, is a central motif indicating growth and a return to one's origins. Together, the snake and fern inspire confidence as we start over or embark along a new path.

UPRIGHT: A rebirth is imminent. Summon the magical protection of the fern and wriggle free of old trappings.

REVERSE: You may be feeling meek or fearful in the face of necessary change. Remember that all things must come to an end, and endings needn't be sorrowful. As a snake loses its skin, revealing a new layer of healthy scales, you too must shed what no longer serves.

Can I grow by returning to my point of origin?

*Who or what protects me when I shed
my skin and become vulnerable?*



XXXV THE LADYBUG AND SWEET PEA

MEANING: *happiness*



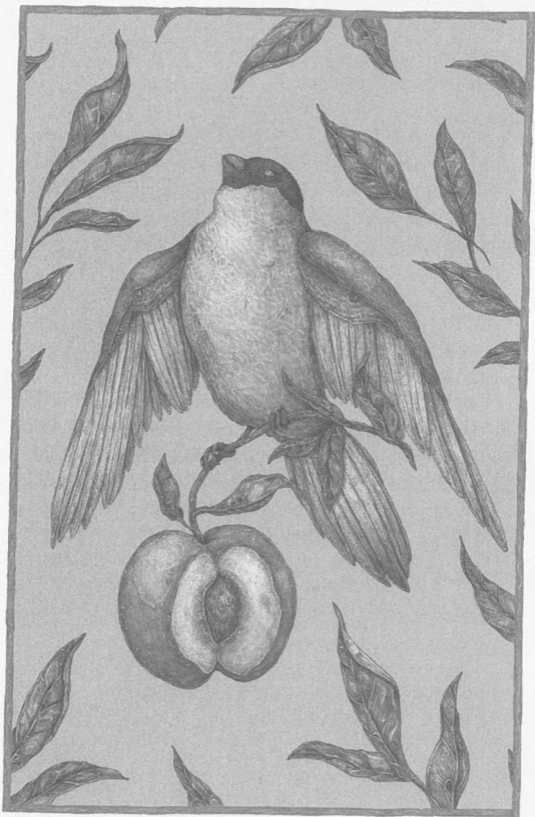
ymbols of good luck and fortune, ladybugs are wonderful insects known to keep garden pests like aphids at bay. The sweet pea is a beautiful, scented climber. In the Victorian era, sweet peas were given to thank hosts for a lovely time. Combined, the ladybug and sweet pea represent ease and happiness.

UPRIGHT: You are entering a period of happiness, positivity, and good luck. Celebrate your joy by sharing it with others.

REVERSE: Beware of taking on too much. You may feel you have things under control, but the balance is delicate. Honor your limits to preserve a happy outlook.

What brings me happiness?

How do I invite more joy into my life?



XXXVI THE FINCH AND PEACH

MEANING: **romance**



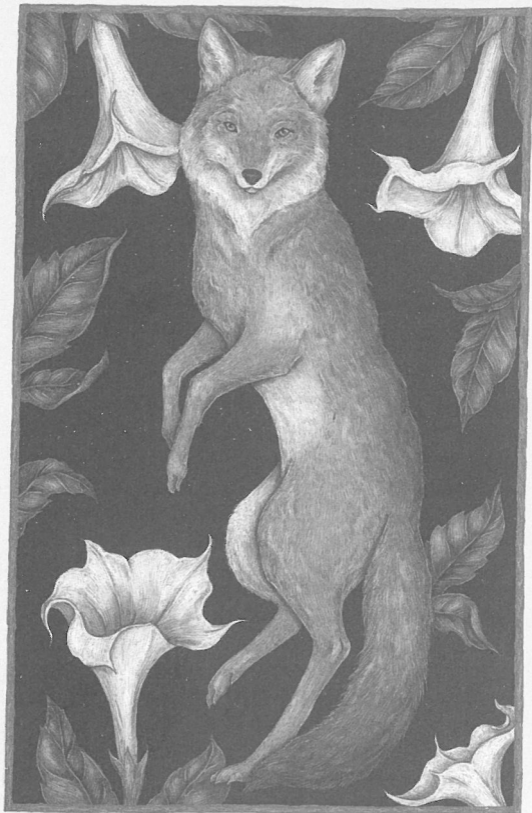
Love is in the air when the Finch and Peach appears! The peach, a sweetly scented, heart-shaped fruit, has long been associated with fertility, sexuality, and love. And the lively finch symbolizes exuberance, enthusiasm, and excitement.

UPRIGHT: Your vibrancy and charm have led to a blossoming romance. Be open to and accepting of new love's many delights.

REVERSE: Your timidity or unwillingness to take risks may be hindering your chances at love. Remember that vulnerability, while frightening, is essential to healthy relationships.

How do I show others I love them?

*Do I feel safe and supported enough
to be open to new love?*



XXXVII THE COYOTE AND DATURA

MEANING: *deceit*



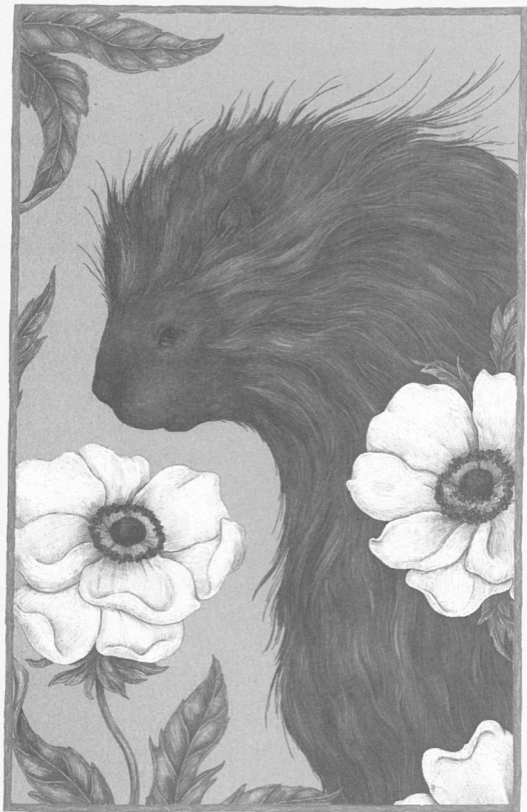
In the Victorian language of flowers, datura warns of deceitful charms. It's a beautiful flower but extremely poisonous and said to be an ingredient in the salve that allows witches to fly on their broomsticks. Likewise, coyotes are often depicted as tricksters, known for their slyness and cunning.

UPRIGHT: Beware the charming stranger. Before opening up to someone new, consider what they may have to gain from your trust.

REVERSE: Now is a time to trust your instincts. If your gut is telling you that something isn't right, heed the warning.

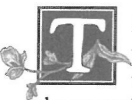
Whom can I trust?

*How do I show others I am
worthy of their trust?*



XXXVIII THE PORCUPINE AND ANEMONE

MEANING: *boundaries*



The porcupine, with its impressive quills, is a well-known symbol of self-defense. According to a legend common among Anishinaabe tribes, the porcupine got its quills by placing the branches of a hawthorn tree on its back, defending itself against the bear. Nanabozho—the trickster spirit in Ojibwe myth—saw the porcupine’s cleverness and fashioned it a coat of quills to wear from then on. Just as the porcupine curls into a ball to defend itself from predators, the anemone flower turns inward and down during rainstorms, protecting its delicate petals from damage.

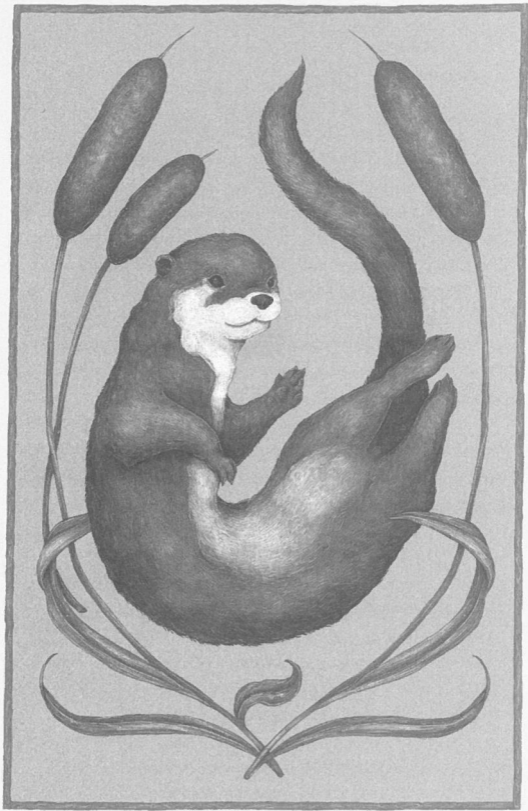
UPRIGHT: You cannot help others unless you first help yourself. Maintain healthy boundaries around your time and energy, giving generously only once you are sufficiently fed.

REVERSE: Take care not to judge others who seem bristly or closed off. Consider that they may have good reason to protect themselves from harm. Respect their boundaries, allowing them time to open up on their own terms.

How can I ensure my needs are met?

*Have I established healthy boundaries
around my time and energy?*

Do I respect the boundaries of others?



XXXIX THE OTTER AND CATTAIL

MEANING: *peace*



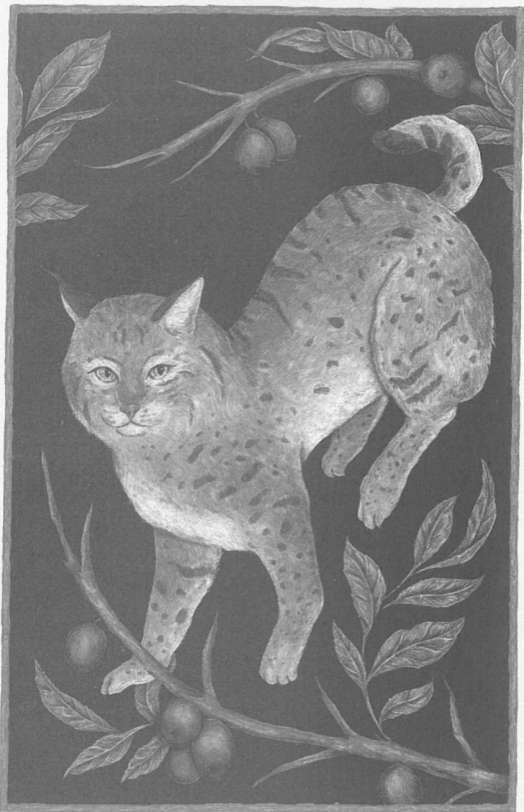
he otter glides through the water with grace and fluidity. A beautiful sight to behold, the otter's playful swim brings calm and joy to those who witness it. The cattail is a symbol of peace and prosperity. It can be used for a variety of domestic purposes, from basket weaving and bedding to home insulation. It is also a nourishing food.

UPRIGHT: You are entering a time of peace and tranquility. Enjoy it, allowing yourself to relax fully.

REVERSE: As you navigate a difficult time, remember that your discomfort is temporary. Limit your struggle by going with the flow. Turn onto your back from time to time, letting the current carry you forward.

*Do I allow myself to enjoy
peace when it finds me?*

*Am I struggling needlessly
against a strong current?*



XL THE BOBCAT AND BLACKTHORN

MEANING: *patience*

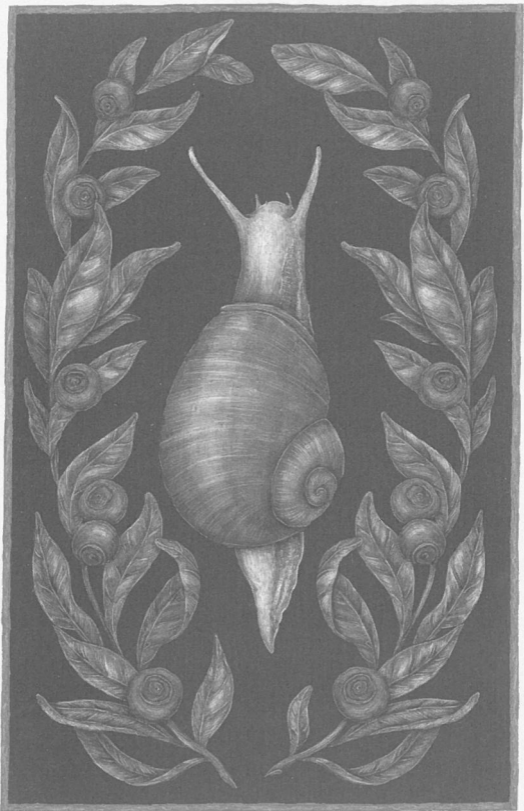


Bobcats are stealthy hunters, blending easily into their environment. They are independent creatures who can wait for hours for their prey, pouncing up to ten feet at the right moment. The blackthorn is a thorny shrub covered in bittersweet berries called sloes. Associated with overcoming obstacles, the blackthorn's sharp spines provide shelter to vulnerable birds. According to lore, if blackthorn berries are plentiful, the coming winter will be severe. Traditionally harvested in late autumn, sloes provide nourishment in the form of jams, wines, and other hardy treats with which to patiently pass a harsh winter.

UPRIGHT: A difficult journey ahead requires preparation and patience. Channel the bobcat's stealth and pack plenty of provisions. Ration your sustenance carefully, remembering that berries are often sweetest after a hard frost.

REVERSE: You have acted too hastily and are in over your head. Notice what preparations might've served you and plan more carefully in the future.

*How might I mentally prepare such that
I can survive when supplies are low?*



XLI THE SNAIL AND HUCKLEBERRY

MEANING: *trust in the invisible*



he determined and deliberate snail carries its home on its back. While it may seem like a simple, humble creature, the spiral of its shell portends great mystery, representing the cycle of life. Like the snail, the huckleberry is sometimes associated with smallness and insignificance; a “huckleberry,” in late nineteenth-century slang, was a person of little consequence. However, it is a powerful fruit that grows plentifully, offering life-sustaining nutrients to both humans and woodland creatures. Together, the snail and huckleberry invite an appreciation for what is beneath the surface and trust in what cannot be seen.

UPRIGHT: Now is a good time to follow your bliss, trusting in invisible supports. With great risk comes great reward.

REVERSE: You are relying too heavily on physical proof. Grow quiet and observant; allow subtle clues—even feelings and intimations—to guide you.

*When have I benefitted from
trusting in subtle clues?*

*How can I look beyond appearances
toward deeper meaning?*



XLII THE EEL AND IRIS

MEANING: *safety*



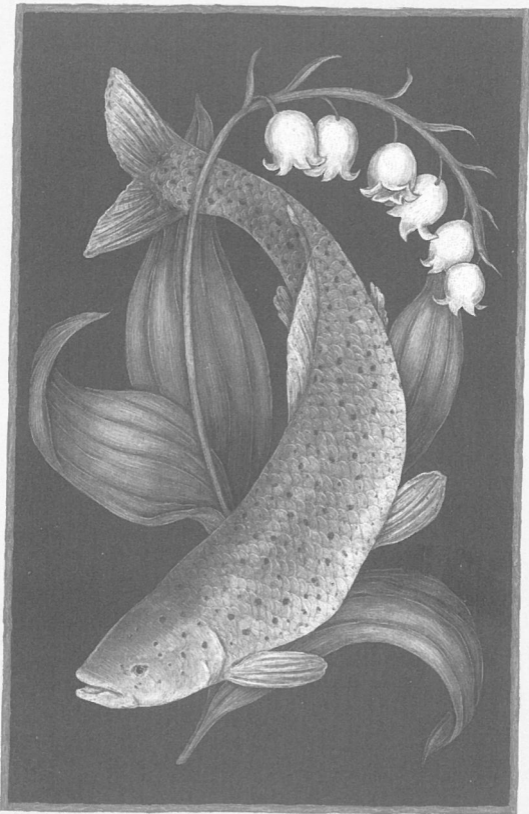
els are furtive creatures, often burying themselves in the murky depths. The idiom “slippery as an eel” refers to the eel’s ability to escape harm. The iris is the tall, hardy flower from which the *fleur-de-lis*—a medieval symbol of power and victory—is derived. Together, the stealthy eel and the mighty iris indicate safety in our homes, relationships, and work.

UPRIGHT: Now is a good time to establish healthy boundaries. If others take offense, do not fret over their reaction—stand firm in your power like the iris.

REVERSE: A transgression has occurred, and you may feel betrayed or violated. Anger and hostility are natural responses to betrayal. Honor your tender state by burrowing deep like the eel. Surround yourself in support and take the time you need to recover.

What do I need in order to feel safe?

How can I extend safety to others?



XLIII THE TROUT AND LILY OF THE VALLEY

MEANING: *purification*



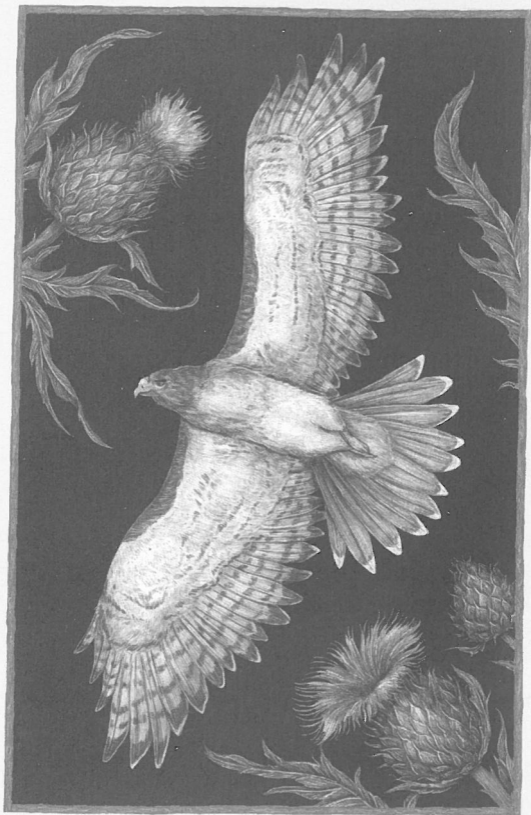
Both the trout and the lily of the valley symbolize return and restoration. A river or lake teeming with trout indicates a balanced and healthy ecosystem. Conservation efforts at rewilding streams often focus on reintroducing trout to their native habitats once rivers have been decontaminated and barriers such as dams removed. Likewise, in the Victorian language of flowers, the lily of the valley communicates a return to happiness. This is perhaps due to the legend of Saint Leonard—a hermit said to have slain the last dragon in England. Wherever the blood of the dragon was spilled, lilies of the valley grew. And once the dragon was killed, Saint Leonard returned to his life of peaceful solitude.

UPRIGHT: Your difficulties are subsiding, and happiness will soon be restored. Now is the perfect time for quiet meditation and deep introspection.

REVERSE: A toxic element is in the way of your happiness. Consider what pollutants may be upsetting your balance and seek to remove them.

*Is there a harmony within my
personal ecosystem?*

*How do I tell the difference between
a toxic person, situation, or idea and
one that is required for balance?*



XLIV THE HAWK AND THISTLE

MEANING: *graceful persistence*



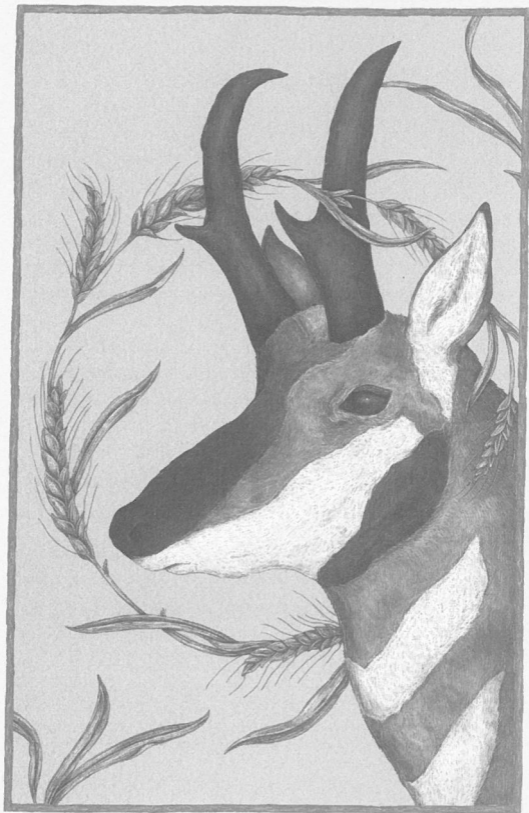
he hawk is a keen and vigilant observer, so much so that “watchful” and “hawkeyed” have become synonyms. An apex predator, the hawk glides gracefully on the wind, its sharp talons ever at the ready. The thistle can thrive in a variety of environments, from verdant hills to rocky shores. Its spiked, stinging leaves protect its radiant flower, which perches like a crown upon its stem.

UPRIGHT: You can act fiercely while maintaining your grace and dignity. Sharpen your talons but don't lose your crown.

REVERSE: External pressures have weakened your resolve. Remember your worth and guard it closely.

Am I too easily influenced by my environment?

How can I thrive in a difficult situation?



XLV THE ANTELOPE AND WHEAT

MEANING: *nourishment*



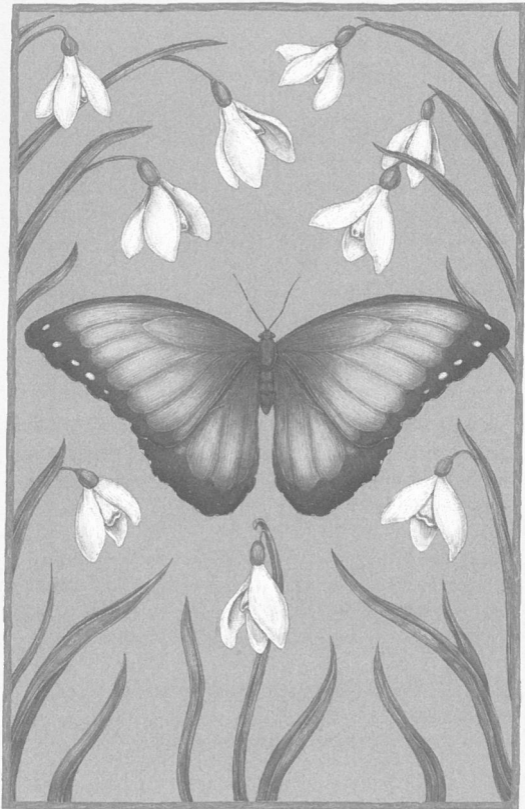
Antelope are associated with community. Traveling in large herds, they work together to detect predators, locate food, and care for the young and old. This way, the group supports the thriving of each individual. Likewise, golden sheaves of wheat are ancient symbols of prosperity. A relatively easy grain to grow, store, and convert to flour, and a staple crop around the world, wheat is closely associated with wealth and abundance. Together, the antelope and wheat call us to nourish ourselves and our communities.

UPRIGHT: You are feeling fulfilled, nourished, and secure. Celebrate your good fortune by sharing it with others in need. Invest in your community, and ensure you are supported in leaner times.

REVERSE: You may be feeling neglected or overlooked. While you may be tempted to hide away, try to emulate the antelope, rarely without its pack. Your friends and companions can help nourish you back to vitality.

Who or what makes me feel nourished?

What fills my proverbial cup?



XLVI THE BUTTERFLY AND SNOWDROP

MEANING: *hope*



The butterfly and snowdrop, two symbols of spring, remind us that winter will soon end, and hope is on the horizon. Butterflies develop through metamorphosis, transforming from an egg into a larva, then becoming a pupa or chrysalis, and finally, hatching into an adult. The egg stage is so humble, and the full-grown butterfly so astounding, the process can feel like magic. The snowdrop has a bit of magic about it as well. It is one of the first flowers to appear toward the end of winter, signifying that brighter, longer days are just around the corner.

UPRIGHT: A period of hardship is coming to a close, and better days are ahead. Take heart in signs of the coming thaw.

REVERSE: Now is not the time to act. Remain patient. Snowdrops are not hasty for winter's end, and a chrysalis cannot be rushed to hatch. Given time, both will spring forth in health and beauty.

What gives me hope in times of scarcity?



XLVII THE ROOSTER AND SUNFLOWER

MEANING: **communication**



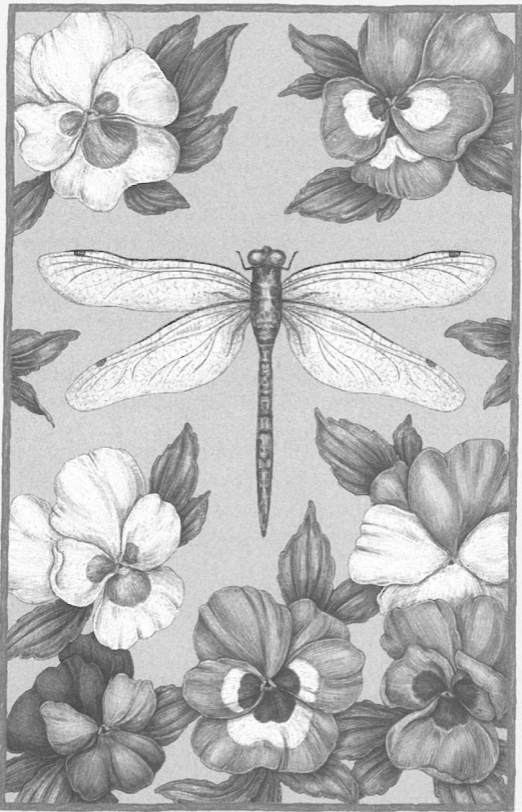
This is the card of the good leader and the kind king. Roosters wake before the rest of the farm, alerting everyone to the rising sun. They are protective of their territory and self-confident, but they are good communicators, honest, and capable. The sunflower is often the tallest bloom in the garden, rising high and turning its face toward the sun. While it may hover over other flowers, it bestows warmth and joy on any garden.

UPRIGHT: You are well-suited to positions of authority. Remember that clear and open communication is key to successful leadership.

REVERSE: A miscommunication has occurred. As a leader, resist the temptation to blame others. Instead, clarify your intentions, seek understanding, and, if needed, ask forgiveness.

How can I improve my communication?

*What styles of communication
do I admire in others?*



XLVIII THE DRAGONFLY AND PANSY

MEANING: *balance*



Perching with a delicate grace, the dragonfly is a symbol of balance. Nimble and attuned as a dancer, it moves effortlessly through the air, shifting direction with ease. Pansies are named for the French word *pensée*, meaning thought, and were given by the Victorians as tokens of thoughtfulness. Together, the dragonfly and pansy indicate a harmony of thought and action.

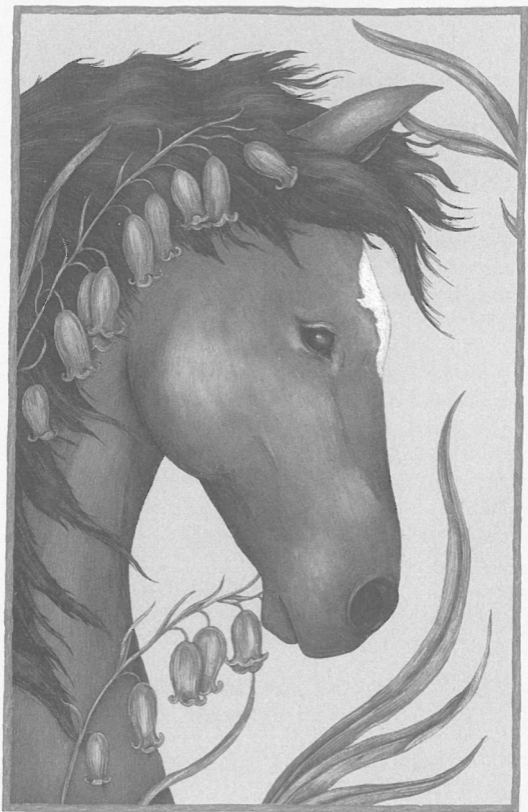
UPRIGHT: Like a dragonfly hovering above water, you are healthy and confident. Your physical skill is matched by your mental and emotional strength.

REVERSE: You have stumbled into an unhealthy obsession. Recall the way a dragonfly shifts direction with ease and aim for the same nimbleness of thought.

*Is my attention shared among my
various interests and endeavors,
or do I tend to favor just one?*

*Am I satisfied by how I spend
my time and energy?*

How can I build more balance into my life?



XLIX THE HORSE AND BLUEBELL

MEANING: *modest fortitude*



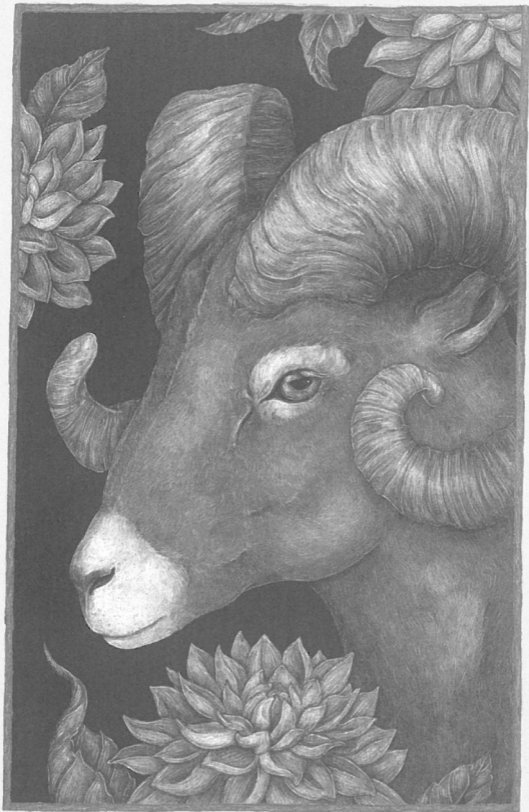
Its downcast blooms cause the bluebell to bow gently at its stem, symbolizing modesty. In contrast, the horse is a striking creature, proud and muscular. Able to bear great loads and travel long distances, it is known for its superior strength and stamina. Taken together, the horse and bluebell remind us that the greatest feats are the result of much humble practice.

UPRIGHT: Work quietly and consistently. The time to shine will present itself in the future; for now, focus on your process rather than its reward.

REVERSE: Your yoke has grown heavy. Remember why you began on your journey; if the reason is worthy, continue pushing. Your efforts will make you stronger.

Am I too focused on earning praise and not focused enough on the substance of my work?

When is it worthwhile to push through adversity, and when is it better to rest?



L THE RAM AND DAHLIA

MEANING: *determination*



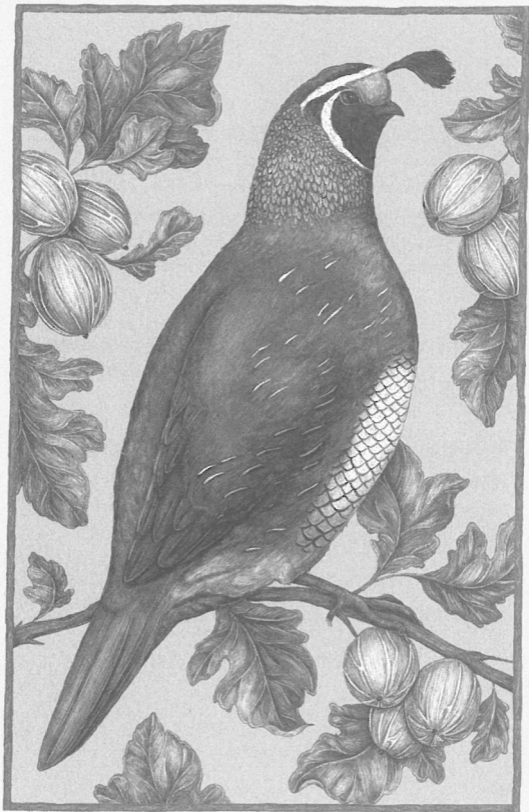
The Ram and Dahlia is a card of action. The ram charges up the mountain with steady determination, removing any obstacles with its strong horns. Called the “Queen of the Autumn Garden,” the dahlia is known for its persistence. It produces flowers in the summer and well into the fall, outlasting most other blooms.

UPRIGHT: You have the power to accomplish your wildest dreams. While others may tire or lose interest, you are persistent and will see your ambitions through.

REVERSE: Your stubbornness is hindering your progress. While “ramming through” may seem like the best and quickest way to achieve success, some endeavors require flexibility, regular reassessment, or help from others.

What am I most determined to accomplish?

*When have I worked best alone, and when
have I benefitted from another's help?*



LI THE QUAIL AND GOOSEBERRY

MEANING: **anticipation**



resh gooseberries are a tempting treat, but pick them without care, and you might hurt yourself. Gooseberry bushes are loaded with thorns meant to protect the delicate fruit within. Similarly, the quail anticipates danger by hiding among low-growing vegetation. From its obscured perch, it keeps careful watch, monitoring for predators.

UPRIGHT: The event or outcome you've anticipated is about to occur. Take advantage of your foreknowledge, preparing for what's to come.

REVERSE: You've made a mistake that has put you in danger. Use this experience to better guard against this outcome in the future.

*Am I often surprised or caught
off-guard by how things turn out?*

*How can I balance vigilance with
a healthy openness to risk?*

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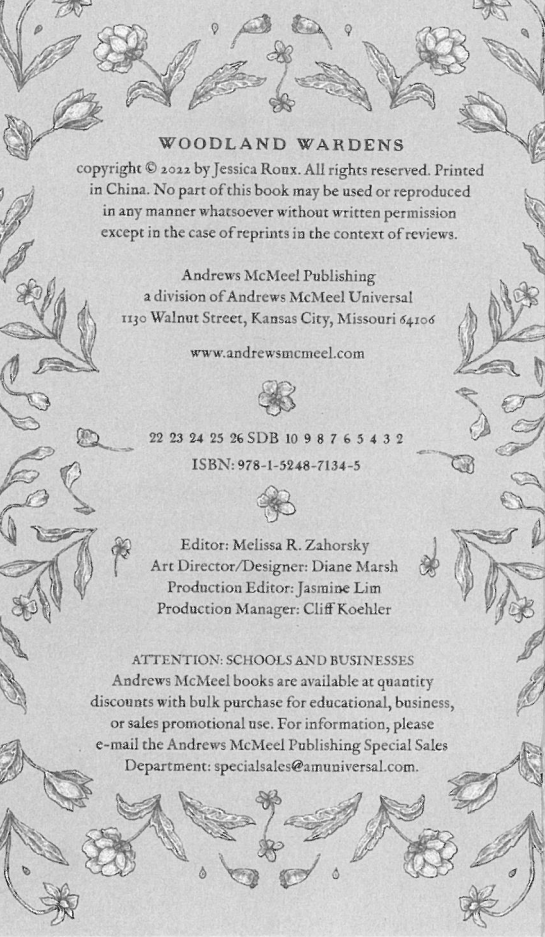
Finally, my heartfelt thanks to my parents, Richard and Muriel, for encouraging me to follow my dreams and make the work I believe in.

AUTHOR BIO

Photo by Michelle Gevint



Jessica Roux is a Nashville-based freelance illustrator and the author of *Floriography: An Illustrated Guide to the Victorian Language of Flowers*. She loves exploring in her own backyard and being surrounded by an abundance of nature. Using subdued colors and rhythmic shapes, she renders flora, fauna, and much more in a richly detailed, old-world style. A seasoned reader of tarot, she loves to include hidden symbolism inspired by the Rider-Waite-Smith deck in her illustrations.


A decorative border of various flowers and leaves surrounds the text. The flowers include large multi-petaled blossoms, smaller five-petaled flowers, and buds. The leaves are elongated and pointed.

WOODLAND WARDENS

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A small, simple line drawing of a five-petaled flower with a central stem and two leaves.

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